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AUTHOR	Corbett, H. Dickson; D'Amico, Joseph J.
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ABSTRACT

This program has been developed to train those who would direct educational improvement and change efforts. This training program was written to transfer the findings of research described in "School Context and School Change: Implications for Effective Planning" by Corbett, Dawson, and Firestone (1984, Teachers College Press) to practice. Six training sessions were developed. As a whole, the sessions help participants understand school organization and its impact on both the change process and field agent behavior. Individually, the sessions focus on different aspects of school organization, the change process, field agent activities, and the interaction among them. The training sessions developed are: (1) school context and school change; (2) site influence on the field agent; (3) planning and participation; (4) spreading change; (5) promoting lasting change; and (6) getting started. Each session begins with a trainer's overview that identifies the session's purposes, outlines its goals and activity sequence, and provides an estimate of the amount of time that should be devoted to the session's guidelines. Following the overview are the presentations, skill development exercises, and case studies to be used in the sessions. Masters for handouts are provided at the end of each section. (SI)

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Context and Change
A Training Program for School Improvement

H. Dickson Corbett

Joseph J. D'Amico

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Research for Better Schools, Inc.
444 North Third Street
Philadelphia, PA 19123-4107

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CONTEXT AND CHANGE:
A TRAINING PROGRAM FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

The last decade of research on educational change convincingly demonstrates that school improvement is most successful when innovative practices are adjusted to accommodate idiosyncratic features of a school or district. Likewise, recent research conducted by Research for Better Schools (RBS) has found that the processes involved in planning, implementing, and continuing change efforts are more effective when they are tailored for an individual site. This research has been described in detail in School Context and School Change: Implications for Effective Planning by Corbett, Dawson, and Firestone (1984, Teachers College Press). To help get these important findings into practice, RBS has developed the Context and Change program to train those who would direct improvement and change efforts.

Throughout Context and Change the term "field agent" is used generically. The term includes anyone who assists a school in its efforts to improve. Exactly who this local assistor is depends upon how a local school improvement project is structured. The most likely candidates as field agents are building principals, district curriculum coordinators, intermediate service agency staff (ISA), and state education agency field staff (SEA). The Context and Change program is an appropriate resource for those who either initiate an improvement activity (e.g., district superintendents, ISA/SEA program administrators), lead such an activity, or instruct those who do so (e.g., instructors of educational administration, curriculum, supervision; educational consultants). For these categories of people the kind of information in Context and Change should be an integral component of their own training or training they provide to others.

It is our experience that while most field agents receive adequate training in the content of a specific school improvement activity, little, if any, training is given concerning the process of actually implementing the desirable practices. As a result, much of the content knowledge does not get translated into action. Superintendents, instructors, and consultants should balance their attention to content with at least equal attention to process. Context and Change offers a way to do this; it is a training program that focuses on the process of change to be used by a trainer with a group of field agents.

Training Program Content

The RBS Context and Change field agent training program has two purposes.

- To explain how differences in schools have important influences on the success of school improvement efforts in those schools.
- To provide those who direct or assist school improvement with the opportunity to develop ways to take these school differences into account in their work.

To accomplish these purposes we have developed six training sessions. Taken as a whole, the sessions help participants understand school organization and its impact on both the change process and field agent behavior. Individually, the sessions focus on different aspects of school organization, the change process, field agent activities, and the interaction among them.

Session One: School Context and School Change introduces participants to the major themes of the Context and Change training program.

- School conditions influence the change process.
- School conditions influence the success or failure of change efforts.
- School conditions should influence how a field agent approaches his or her work with a school.

In it we identify and describe eight school conditions which research indicates are the most significant influences on change processes and note which aspects of the change process these conditions affect.

In Session Two: Site Influence on the Field Agent three themes are presented to participants.

- Field agent activities that work in one site may not work in another.
- School conditions are largely responsible for what works and what does not.
- Field agent activities must be tailored to account for local school conditions.

We relate aspects of school context to field agent behavior and, in so doing, emphasize the value of field agent flexibility for enhancing the likelihood that school improvement will succeed. Finally, we demonstrate that effective field agent behavior is the result of the field agent adapting his or her activities to a school's context.

Session Three: Planning and Participation describes different local school conditions that influence and affect the process of sequential planning. Examples from research illustrate that often too much time and effort are spent on planning and not enough on implementing. We also describe instances where staff participation in an improvement program influenced a project negatively rather than positively.

Session Four: Spreading Change concentrates on ways in which innovative practices spread throughout a school. In this session we introduce the concept that where there are tight links within individual subunits (e.g., departments, grade-level teams), or between subunits and the policies and procedures that govern their behavior, new practices will spread widely. Additionally, we explain that when these links are loose or non-existent, new practices will not spread beyond the initial innovators. We suggest how field agents can identify the presence or absence of linkage patterns in a school and develop strategies to take advantage of them where they exist or create them where they do not exist.

Session Five: Promoting Lasting Change is the most critical for field agents. We caution against a common mistake: equating success with simply getting the majority of school staff to begin using project-related new practices. We explain that even successfully implemented changes are often discarded if innovating staff do not continue to receive encouragement after initial implementation. We outline three post-implementation events that can significantly improve the chances that an improvement project will last:

- continued provision of incentives
- incorporation of new classroom activities into curriculum guides
- assessments of effectiveness.

Finally, we relate this discussion back to our overall theme and show that the probability of these events happening is contingent upon the mix of school context characteristics at a site.

In the final session, Session Six: Getting Started, we spell out some of the implications that sessions one through five have for getting an improvement project started at a site. Although it may seem somewhat out of order to have this last, it is not. The foundation for implementation and continuation can be formed early. Thus, knowing where one wants to go is an aid in deciding how to start. We focus on two specific initial activities: building an effective planning team, and analyzing a school's context.

Each of the training sessions contains presentation and discussion sections. In most cases, there are also skill development exercises and case studies intended (1) to help participants enhance their understanding of the concepts, and (2) to boost their effectiveness as field agents. Context and Change is designed to be flexible. As you prepare to use it, bear in mind that it should meet your needs and the needs of those participating in the training program. We recognize that not everyone will want to or need to use it the same way; we have tried to structure the training program so it can be easily adapted to your needs.

Session Structure

Each session of Context and Change begins with a trainer's overview that identifies the session's purposes, outlines its goals and activity sequence, and provides an estimate of the amount of time that should be devoted to the session's activities. The overview also indicates the materials needed to conduct the session. Following the overview are the presentations, skill development exercises, and case studies to be used in the sessions.

The presentations appear in outline and narrative formats. Trainers who are unfamiliar with a session's topics and concepts, or who are pressed for time, may feel more comfortable either reading from the narrative format or distributing copies of the narrative for participants to read. Major points to be made, illustrations from actual experiences, and logical spots to break for discussion--as well as a few suggestions for stimulating discussion--are highlighted. Additional references for those who wish to explore a topic in more depth are included at the end of each presentation. Handout masters are provided for each presentation as well. (If the proper equipment is available, most of the masters can also be used to make over-head transparencies.)

The skill development exercises are intended to reinforce the concepts addressed in the presentations and to enable the participants to work with concepts in a simulation. Each skill development exercise includes:

- a general overview of the exercise
- step-by-step instructions to help trainers introduce, facilitate, and debrief the exercise
- samples of any materials needed for the exercise
- where appropriate, suggesticns for generating discussion.

Case studies are structured similarly. They also contain an overview, a time estimate, step-by-step instructions for use, and discussion suggestions. The case studies are also included as are a set of guidelines for creating your own case study. We have included these guidelines in order to help trainers who wish to develop illustrations and examples that deal more specifically with their participants' experiences than do the case studies provided.

Suggestions for Using Context and Change

Although we developed it as a comprehensive, somewhat long-term training program for field agents, we recognize that some may not need to or want to go through Context and Change from start to finish. Further, even though we have sequenced the training sessions and the activities contained in them, we fully expect trainers to tailor the program to those with whom they will be working, time constraints, and other course/in-service requirements.

Below are some suggestions for maximizing the program's potential as a teaching and learning tool. These suggestions are based on our experiences using these materials with field agents and on accepted principles of adult education and training.

- Before conducting field agent training, work with participants to formulate a specific set of goals for that training and--if appropriate--modify, add, or replace goals as the training progresses.
- Select the topics you cover and the activities you use according to your goals. Don't include information or activities that don't serve your goals. Also, if necessary, consider creating your own activities to better meet your goals.
- Don't forget to consider logistics. Seemingly insignificant things like scheduling, room arrangements, refreshments, and the like can ruin any training session.
- Consider your audience. Structure the training so the participants get the most from it--be sure it serves their needs, engages their interest, motivates them, and hits their level of understanding.

- Use experience as your primary tool. Relate discussions and concepts to your own or the audience's life. Rely more heavily on the skill development exercises than presentations or readings to drive points home. Always try to bring a discussion of concepts back to experiences familiar to the audience.

- Treat your audience as peers. Never talk down--talk with. Always build on their talents and experiences, if possible, and bring them into the training process as "experts" in areas of their experience.

- Involve your audience. Active learning is the most effective learning. Involve them in planning training activities where possible.

- Evaluate the training as often and as candidly as possible. Don't be disappointed over negative comments or suggestions for improvements. They usually help to make the training more effective.

- Schedule field agent training as more than a "one-shot" activity. Stretching it out will give everyone a chance to learn the information more thoroughly and a chance to use it as they learn it. It also will give you more chances to adjust the training to account for changing needs and interests.

- Read School Context and School Change: Implications for Effective Planning. It is a fuller, richer discussion of the concepts you'll be trying to get across. Reading it will give you a better understanding of the field agent's role in change, and thus help you accomplish the goals of this training program.

Initial and Concluding Activities

We recommend two activities to set the tone for each session: "Today's Goals" and "Telling War Stories." These may be used as the first and last activities for any session in the training sequence. Activity descriptions appear on the following two pages.

ACTIVITY: TODAY'S GOALS

Offering Context and Change to many audiences has shown that setting goals is a vital first step in any training session. Otherwise, both the instructor and the audience run the risk of losing sight of the most efficient, productive way to conduct the training sessions and what is to be accomplished. We recommend a simple, informal process for setting goals which we call "Today's Goals."

Begin the process by deciding your daily training goals. We have included sets of goals for each session. These goals have worked well for us and our audiences and we recommend that you use them. You may want to alter or add to them, however.

Once you decide your daily training goals, ask your audience to alter or add to them their goals. We found that doing this serves five very important purposes.

- It enables you, the trainer, to evaluate the audience's level of expertise--and the level of training they need.
- It helps the audience realize that their training needs are being considered.
- It helps you tailor the training to your audience.
- It serves as an excellent point of reference for all activities and discussions, enabling you to draw on your audience's needs and preferences.
- It involves your audience from the outset, setting a tone of involvement and sharing that should be carried throughout the training sessions.

Once set, "Today's Goals" should be subject to modifications and additions by you or your audience. At the session's end, you and your audience should review progress toward meeting "Today's Goals" as an informal evaluation of the session.

ACTIVITY: TELLING WAR STORIES

At the end of each training session, it is useful to provide participants with a specific opportunity to relate the information they have received to actual experiences. We frequently refer to this as "War Story Time." That is, we ask field agents to tell everyone about experiences they have had and/or know about that either support information presented or challenge it. In essence, participants are supplying their own case studies for the trainers and participants to analyze. The tendency is for the trainer to make the participants do all of the analysis in these situations. Resist this tendency. Obviously, one of the trainer's objectives is to encourage interaction, but the trainer's opinion is valued by participants, and this activity invariably provides opportunities to summarize what has happened and to leave the group with a few teasers for the next session. To get it going, simply ask the group if anything they have heard reminds them of a situation they have been in or know about. This simple stimulus is usually enough. If it is not, the trainer should tell a "war story" to get the ball rolling.

Sample Training Sequences

In keeping with our earlier assertion that Context and Change should be flexible, yet realizing that many trainers appreciate some guidance when organizing their training programs, we offer the following sample training sequences.

Half Day (4 hour) Training Workshop

This format introduces the core ideas contained in the program and encourages field agents to begin to apply these ideas to their particular roles. This is important because few in the training program are likely to see themselves as field agents. Participants typically continue to view their job as primarily being an administrator, teacher, or whatever their formal job title says.

Purposes:

- To introduce and describe the characteristics of school context and illustrate how they affect field agent behavior.
- To describe the life cycle of the change process.
- To provide simulated experiences in dealing with factors of school context.

Agenda:

- Today's Goals - 30 minutes
  Discussion with entire group in which trainer explains his or her goals for the workshop and elicits training goals from the participants.
- Context and Change (Session One presentation) - 45 minutes
  Presentation outlining the eight characteristics of school context and the three stages in the life cycle of a change effort and how they influence each other.

- The Ideal Field Agent (Session Two activity) - 30 minutes
  An opportunity for participants to discuss the attributes which they think might help a field agent do a better job.

Break - 15 minutes

- Field Agent Effectiveness and School Context (Session Two presentation) - 45 minutes
  Presentation focusing on the role school context plays or should play in helping field agents determine their behaviors and strategies.

- Adapting to Context (Session Two activity) - 45 minutes
  An opportunity for participants to use the information presented thus far in a simulation or case study to select and discuss alternative field agent strategies and behaviors.

- Telling War Stories - 30 minutes
  Discussion in which participants relate the day's information and experiences to their own situations.

One day (7-1/2 hour) Training Workshop

A full day training workshop should begin with the exercises and presentations outlined for the half day workshop above. These activities provide information which the participants will use throughout subsequent training activities.

The second half of a full day training session should focus on the stage in the life cycle of an improvement effort that is most appropriate for the participants' current field agent activities. That is, if the participants are carrying out activities related to the initiation stage of an improvement project, part two of the workshop should focus on exercises and presentations in Session Three, "Sequential Planning and Participation." If their activities are related to the implementation stage, part two should focus on the exercises and presentations of Session Four, "Spreading Change." Or it should focus on Session Five, "Promoting

Lasting Change," if participants are involved in continuation stage activities. The important thing to keep in mind when designing this part of a full day workshop is that is must be as "real" as possible for participants. And, it must be as immediately useful for their "real" activities as possible, too.

The following one day training sequence is offered as an illustration. It is for field agents at the initiation stage of the improvement process, but easily can be modified by substituting implementation or continuation exercises and presentations where appropriate.

Purposes:

- To introduce and describe the characteristics of school context.
- To illustrate how these characteristics can influence a field agent's behavior and activities.
- To describe the life cycle of the change process.
- To show the parts that different characteristics of school context play in the life cycle of a change process.
- To provide simulated experiences in dealing with factors of school context.
- To show how school context affects two critical aspects of the initiation phase of change: sequential planning and involving local staff.
- To provide simulated and real opportunities for devising strategies for sequential planning and for involving staff.

Agenda:

- Today's Goals - 30 minutes
  Discussion with entire group in which the trainer explains his or her goals for the workshop and elicits training goals from the participants.

- Context and Change (Session One presentation) - 45 minutes
  Presentation outlining the eight characteristics of school context and the three stages in the life cycle of a change effort and how they influence each other.

- The Ideal Field Agent (Session Two activity) - 30 minutes
  An opportunity for participants to discuss the attributes which they think might help a field agent do a better job.

Break - 15 minutes

- Field Agent Effectiveness and School Context (Session Two presentation) - 45 minutes
  Presentation focusing on the role school context plays or should play in helping field agents determine their behaviors and strategies.

- Adapting to Context (Session Two activity) - 45 minutes
  An opportunity for participants to use the information presented thus far in a simulation or case study to select and discuss alternative field agent strategies and behaviors.

Lunch - 45 minutes

- Sequential Planning (Session Three presentation) - 30 minutes
  Presentation outlining some of the major pitfalls of planning, describing how these are related to school context, and offering some suggestions for avoiding these pitfalls.

- The Planning Game (Session Three activity) - 45 minutes
  A simulation designed to enable participants to use some of the sequential planning strategies introduced earlier and to prepare them for the next set of concepts.

- Participation (Session Three presentation) - 30 minutes
  Presentation focusing on how and why staff get involved in the change process and what field agents can do to get the most effective participation.

Break - 15 minutes

- Barriers, Solutions, Incentives, and Disincentives (Session Three activity) - 45 minutes
  An opportunity for reassessment and modification (based on new information) of the planning strategies adopted earlier.

- Telling War Stories - 30 minutes
  Discussion in which participants relate the day's information and experiences to their own situations.

Comprehensive Training

If the program is to be used to help field agents understand all phases of the change process and how context influences each one, we make the following suggestions:

- Conduct training sessions as half day seminars, preferably four of them within a two or three week period. This will give participants a chance to digest the information, think about it in terms of their own assignments, and perhaps bring more of their experiences to each subsequent session.
- Begin each training seminar with the Today's Goals exercise. This will keep each relevant to participants and insure that they will be involved.
- Review the characteristics of context briefly at the start of each seminar. Understanding and utilizing context is the major message of this program; participants should know these characteristics and have them in mind at all times.
- Conclude each seminar session with the Telling War Stories exercise. It is important that participants relate seminar activities and information to their current and future experiences.
- In cases where participants are using the Context and Change training program as preparation for a specific field agent assignment, incorporate a concrete planning activity in the training program. This planning activity could be included as a part of each seminar session or as a culminating activity for the entire program.
- If possible, schedule a series of follow-up sessions for participants. More analogous to staff meetings than formal seminars, these regularly scheduled sessions could be devoted to discussions, exchanges of experiences, and problem solving activities in which participants use each other as resources.

Using Context and Change in a Course

This training program can easily be adapted for use in graduate level administration and curriculum courses. It essentially contains six lectures. By combining these with several of the skill development exercises and case studies, an instructor has material for a nine to twelve hour course of study.

Writing Your Own Case Studies

Throughout *Context and Change* we have included case studies drawn from our experiences and the experiences of others investigating the impact of school context and the change process. We have included the cases as a convenient, realistic way to make points about the research evidence and recommendations; and we hope they are useful in helping you and those you are training to analyze the concepts.

Theory, research, and experience in adult education tell us, however, that case studies are most effective when they coincide with and mirror one's situation. Before using the accompanying case studies, then, we suggest you look them over to see how well they parallel your participants' experiences. If they are not as relevant as they could be for your audience, you may want to consider writing case studies that are drawn from your experiences or those of your audience.

For those who want to rewrite (or write) case studies for *Context and Change*, consider the following guidance.

- Case studies should reinforce concepts. The concepts of *Context and Change* are introduced in the presentations. Develop case studies that incorporate as many of these as possible.

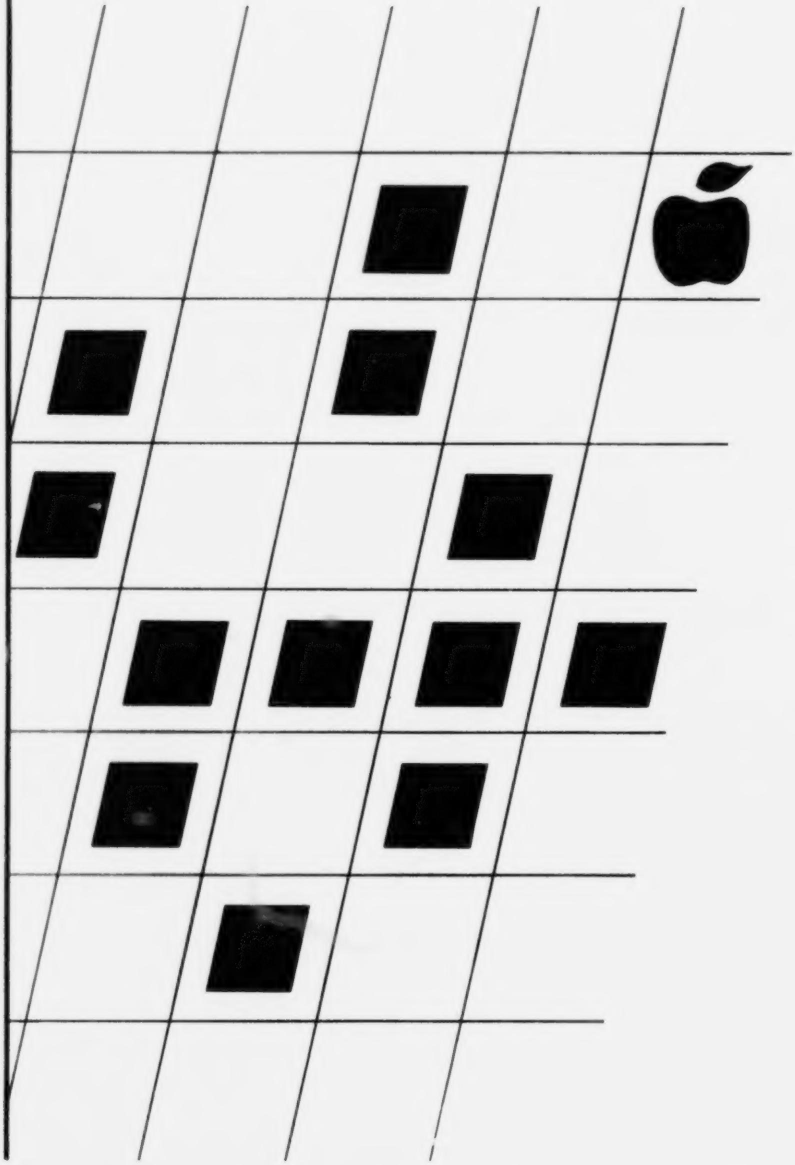
- Case studies should serve the objectives of the session, as should all activities in the session. Develop case studies that help participants meet session objectives.

- Case studies should be comprehensive but not necessarily exhaustive. Develop case studies that are detailed enough to enable thorough, focused analysis without being so detailed as to distract your audience and sidetrack their discussion.

- Case studies should stimulate problem solving and generate discussion about alternatives. Develop case studies that are somewhat open-ended; not ones that are too pat.
- Case study exercises should be structured to lead participants to the point you're trying to make. Develop a procedure for helping participants work through the case studies that will ensure they understand the concepts involved. (NOTE: We sometimes ask key questions during debriefing segments or require key categories of information to be included in report-back segments. Both strategies have worked well.)

CONTEXT &
CHANGE

1.



Session I: Context & Change

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Trainer's Overview

GOALS:

1. To identify and define eight school context conditions that research has revealed to be particularly influential in the success or failure of change processes.

2. To identify those aspects of the change process which are most likely to be influenced by school context.

MATERIALS:

1. Newsprint and markers or chalkboard and chalk for "Today's Goals" activity.

2. School Context and School Change presentation outline and narrative.

3. "Local School Conditions" handout for School Context and School Change presentations.

4. "Life Cycle of an Improvement" handout for School Context and School Change presentations.

5. "Road Map for an Improvement Project" handout for School Context and School Change presentations.

PHYSICAL SETTING:

Theater or classroom style for groups of ten or more; conference style for groups of fewer than ten.

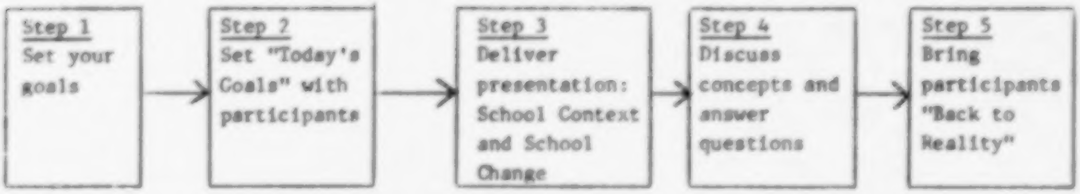
TRAINING SEQUENCE AND TIME REQUIRED:

1. Today's Goals group activity and discussion...
   15 - 30 minutes

2. School Context and School Change presentation...
   30 - 45 minutes

3. Back to Reality group activity and discussion...
   15 - 30 minutes

TRAINING STEPS:


Step 1
Set your goals
Step 2
Set "Today's Goals" with participants
Step 3
Deliver presentation: School Context and School Change
Step 4
Discuss concepts and answer questions
Step 5
Bring participants "Back to Reality"

STEP SUGGESTIONS:

Step 1 Before beginning Session One, set the day's training goals using a combination of the goals we have provided for this session and your training goals.

Step 2 Share your training goals with the audience and ask them to alter them or add their goals to produce Today's Goals. Indicate that the resulting list comprises the day's benchmarks.

Step 3 Deliver the presentation School Context and School Change, using either the outline or narrative. Emphasize the following major points:

- school conditions affect change efforts
- change agents must be sensitive to these school conditions
- change agents should be flexible so they can respond to these changes.

Use "Local School Conditions," "Life Cycle of an Improvement Project," and "Road Map for an Improvement Project" handouts as appropriate during the presentation.

Step 4 Discuss concepts introduced in the presentation. Use audience questions as a point of departure or use questions such as the following to stimulate discussion.

- Does that fit with your experience?
- Does someone have an additional insight?
- Is that clear?
- What implications does that have for your work?

Step 5 Conclude the session with the group activity "Back to Reality," which is intended to help participants relate Session One to their experiences. Encourage your audience to tell "war stories" that either support the information presented or challenge it. Use the discussions stemming from these audience-supplied case studies to summarize and emphasize presentation points, to review Today's Goals, and to leave a few teasers and hints about what is to come.

School Context and School Change: Presentation Outline

A. Project background
   1. Focus of research
   2. Projects studied

B. Local conditions which can influence the success, failure, or modification of the field agent's efforts (distribute HANDOUT on Local School Conditions)

   1. Resources - time, money, materials
   2. Incentives - rewards (positive) and punishments (negative)
   3. Organizational linkages - interrelations, communications, and interdependence among individuals and subunits (loose or tight)
   4. School and district goals and priorities - the extent to which they complement or conflict with change project goal
   5. Factions - teacher factions, administrator factions, amount of competition among factions
   6. Turnover - administrators, teachers, school district personnel
   7. Current practices - balance between requiring too much alteration of status quo and not requiring enough
   8. Legacy of prior projects - staff attitudes

C. The change process and outcomes (distribute HANDOUT on Life Cycle of an Improvement Project)

   1. The initiation of the change process
      a. Role and tasks of field agent
      b. Use and results of systematic planning
      c. Amount and results of teacher participation
   2. The degree and nature of implementation of the new practices
   3. Continuation: Whether changes last

D. Practical implications for field agents

   1. Local conditions and the change process mingle to produce outcomes that are unique from school to school
   2. Change agents must be sensitive to local conditions, must take them into account when working with schools, and must try to get local conditions working for them (rather than against them)
   3. Change agents must be flexible in their work, capitalizing on unforseen contextual considerations without sacrificing the goals of their efforts

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4. It is useful to think of the change process as a trip with each of the eight contextual conditions as stops that must be made.

School Context and School Change: Presentation Narrative

This training program, Context and Change, is based on research findings. There are those who believe researchers are like spectators who wander across a battlefield after the fighting is over and shoot the wounded. Although extreme, this point of view is often understandable since researchers typically do record failures and point fingers. They seldom offer advice and guidance.

Context and Change is a departure, however. It's an attempt to point to things that research suggests can make or break an innovation in a school. Many of these things can also make a field agent's work more difficult; but all of them can be turned to your advantage as you go through the process of introducing and implementing an educational innovation and getting it to continue after you are gone.

The information in this program comes from a three year study of three curriculum change projects sponsored by the National Institute of Education (NIE) and carried out by Research for Better Schools, Inc. (RBS) in fourteen schools in Delaware, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. The schools were big and small; rural, suburban, and urban; elementary and secondary; racially mixed and not so racially mixed. In short, they were a fairly good cross-section of American public schools. Because of this, we can feel pretty confident about what the research tells us.

School Context

Returning to the earlier metaphor, after having "shot the wounded" for three years, RBS is now ready to assert that there are eight conditions of school context that will affect any school innovation or improvement effort. The eight are:

1. the availability of school resources
2. the availability and nature of incentives and disincentives for innovative behavior
3. the nature of a school's linkages
4. existing school goals and priorities
5. the nature and extent of faculty factions and tensions
6. turnover in key administrative and faculty positions
7. the nature of knowledge use and current instructional and administrative practices
8. the history of prior change projects.

Before highlighting how and where in the change process these conditions seem to be most influential, we will say a few words to help you understand each. We will take them in the order of their importance in the RBS projects. The order of importance may be somewhat different in your projects, but remember that these eight conditions are likely to have an effect on any project.

1. Availability of Resources

The critical resource needed for change to occur is staff time. Both principals and teachers need to devote valuable time to planning and carrying out a project. Usually this time is not automatically available to them. You have to help them find it.

Put bluntly, principals do not have the time to become heavily involved in every project that comes along. But if they are not involved the project will not make it. For a project to succeed, you have to think about how the principal should be involved. Here we would like to draw a distinction between symbolic and substantive participation. The most important contribution a principal makes to a project is to signal that it has priority. If he or she periodically attends meetings and frequently talks about the project in everyday conversations, staff begin to feel the project is important. When they feel it is important, they make it important. That is symbolic participation and leadership. Substantive participation--where the principal becomes actively involved in the project--is also important, but it typically takes longer. Do not neglect it, but our advice is that you not sacrifice the symbolic by trying to get the principal to sit in on every minute of every meeting.

Obtaining teacher time is another problem. The best rule of thumb is to arrange teachers' time and participation so that meetings or other project activities infringe as little as possible on their regular responsibilities. Basically, teachers want classroom instruction to be the best their kids can get. For many teachers, project time is class time and the idea of relinquishing their students to poorly trained substitutes or other teachers makes many opt out.

2. Availability and Nature of Incentives and Disincentives

Sources of gratification and discouragement can be used as incentives or disincentives, but no motivator consistently acts as one or the other. For example, participation--just described--becomes a disincentive rather than an incentive when the psychic or perceived educational costs of obtaining it outweigh apparent benefits. Money does not seem to be a big motivator, either. Rather, according to Peters and Waterman, authors of the popular book In Search of Excellence, there is a human paradox. On one hand, there is a need to stand out, and on the other a need to belong to a winning team. Thus, what seems to motivate people is a sense that their contribution is valued and that they are contributing to something useful. What develops this sense among teachers we observed? Recognition for participation, a chance to interact with peers and experts, and similar non-economic factors.

3. Nature of School Linkages

The third most important condition is linkage, or the interdependence of a school's subunits--grade-level groups, departments, teams, and the like. By interdependence we mean the extent to which members of a subunit affect each others' instructional behavior. This can occur through joint planning of instruction, or talking to each other about instruction, for example. Later, we will talk about subunits in more detail. For now, it suffices to say that the degree of subunit interdependence in a school will determine the degree to which an innovation or change project will become implemented throughout a school. To put it another way, if teachers do not routinely talk to each other or attempt to coordinate their activities in any way, then information about the innovation and encouragement to make changes connected to the innovation will not be routinely provided. Everything will have to be done formally, and that is time-consuming and less effective. Unfortunately, there is little interdependence in most schools. Teachers work in isolation.

4. School Goals and Priorities

If the change effort does not fit in with one of the two highest priority local goals, it will run into trouble. It will get delayed at times; there will be participant attendance problems; resources may even run out before it's finished. To say that the project is a priority simply is not enough. Any project goal can be identified as important by someone in a district. The fact is that most districts will not have sufficient resources to address more than their top two goals effectively. So what can you do with a project of lesser importance? If you believe that your project won't be a number one or number two priority for the school or district, anticipate that you will have to supply personally much of the impetus and support for the project. Also, you'll have to adjust your expectations for the project downward, and communicate those lowered but realistic expectations to the participants.

5. Nature and Extent of Faculty Factions and Tensions

Staff factions and tensions play a part in the direction change projects eventually take. Occasionally, teachers feel uncomfortable discussing their classroom activities with the principal present. A more frequent manifestation is resentment among faculty members over what they perceive to be privileges awarded to project participants as, for example, when non-project teachers must sacrifice a planning period to cover participants' classes. The upshot is that change projects often get a bad reputation before they are fully introduced to the staff.

6. Turnover of Key Administrators and Faculty

Schools are predictably unpredictable. You can never be sure exactly which specific event will disrupt the day, but you can count on something happening, from fire drills to cafeteria fights. For change projects, staff turnover is one key disruption. During the life of most projects, someone crucial will leave the site--whether it is the principal, a teacher participant, or the superintendent. Such departures usually require the field agent to look for a replacement and to reseek endorsements for the project or search for another internal advocate.

7. Nature of Knowledge Use and Instructional and Administrative Practices

A seventh category of critical contextual conditions are the current practices in the school. For this condition we include three phenomena. First, people traditionally worry about the discrepancy between changes to be made and the current state of organizational performance, or what they're doing versus what they're going to be doing. Too small a discrepancy between what's being done and what will be done often causes potential participants to question the usefulness of the project. Too large a discrepancy creates a change-in-behavior barrier for them to overcome. So a balance has to be struck.

A second, less thought about but equally important factor is the discrepancy between the planning activities and the planning skills of participants. Teachers rarely plan jointly and tend to rely on their experiential information rather than data-based knowledge. Yet many change projects require teachers to do data-based, systematic, cooperative planning. Most teachers need training and assistance to do it. To assume that potential participants can readily take on unfamiliar planning tasks is to assure that planning will be frustrating for all concerned, and probably inconsequential for the decisions about changes to be made.

Earlier we spoke of the need for participants to receive encouragement and reinforcement. Encouragement needed versus encouragement provided constitutes an all too frequent third discrepancy. Schools noticeably fail to provide encouragement and reinforcement for staff that go the extra mile. Staff involved in an improvement project see themselves as going more than an extra mile and require positive strokes. So again, you cannot assume that positive feedback will surface magically to benefit a project when it's not ordinarily present in a school. A little--or a lot--of work on your part will have to take place first.

8. History of Prior Change Projects

Previous projects in a school leave a legacy. In many schools the legacy is that the school is always starting something but never seems to finish it. Over time this legacy builds up and engenders indifference or ambivalent tolerance of new projects on the part of potential participants. This lukewarm reception can be fatal to ambitious outcomes.

School Change

Most of us are aware that change projects have a time dimension, or a life cycle. What is less obvious, however, is that the timing of key events (many related to school context) during this life cycle also has an impact on project success or failure. Generally, researchers speak of the initiation, implementation, and continuation phases of a change project, although these segments usually overlap.

Initiation refers to start-up and planning activities associated with a project--especially field agent behavior, the sequence and nature of planning, and how and why staff choose to participate. We will be looking at these topics in greater depth in Sessions Two and Three, but, for now, the major point we'd like to make is that initiation activities can drain time and energy severely. In education, we often spend much of a change project's life on initial hoopla and fanfare and on devising a plan to carry out the project. Oddly, we seem to spend too little time getting the plan into action. Field agents have to be concerned with balancing the costs and benefits of these activities and in trying to equalize them so staff won't give up during initiation. Additionally, you should not forget to get a sense of the extent of staff interdependence in the school. This will help both implementation and continuation activities. If possible, try to influence participant selection so that there will be some natural mechanisms for communicating and spreading the project to all staff.

Implementation refers to the time when the first efforts are made to put the plan into action throughout the school or in targeted subunits. Researchers often ignored this phase in the past, wrongly assuming that what was introduced would be adopted and implemented. Too many unused curriculum projects belied that confidence. We now recognize that even similar plans get variously implemented. We also recognize that careful attention must be given to key implementation activities, such as how changes will be communicated to targeted staff and what incentives can be made available to them to carry out the plans. Interdependence is extremely important here and is the condition that most determines how much formal effort will be required during this phase. Session Four addresses this phase in more detail.

Only now being recognized in research, continuation is the proof of the pudding for the change process. Typically, this phase begins with the expiration of special technical assistance and funding. If at this point the system is not capable of making the project work on its own, the project dies. Thus staff and school, not the field agent, should be the focus of continuation. Staff have to interact with one another without help; the school must provide encouragement without help; and the school's written procedures and curriculum guides must be adjusted so the changes will survive the tenure of the original implementers. If these events occur, then it is likely that the intended outcome of this phase--evaluation of the changes' effectiveness--will occur. Unfortunately, such events are rare after life support is withdrawn, and many worthy projects end via neglect. Our thoughts on how to avoid this result are provided in Session Five.

Practical Implications for Field Agents

At this point, we want to mention three broad implications of these ideas.

- Local conditions and the change process mingle to produce outcomes that are unique from school to school.
- Change agents must be sensitive to local conditions, must take them into account when working with schools, and must try to get local conditions working for them (rather than against them).
- Change agents must be flexible in their work capitalizing on unforeseen contextual considerations without sacrificing the goals of their efforts.

- Moving from planning to continuation can be viewed as a trip. (Refer audience to handout entitled "Road Map for an Improvement Project.") Each of the contextual conditions are stops through which the road to continuation passes. It may seem quicker to try to bypass several of these steps; in fact the side roads and bypasses never lead back to the successful route. You may be able to see the destination by deviating; but as the old saying goes, "You can't get there from here."

Suggested Reading

Berman, P. (1981). Educational change: An implementation paradigm. In R. Lehming and M. Kane (Eds.), *Improving schools: Using what we know*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage (pp. 253-286).

Corbett, H. D., Dawson, J. A., and Firestone, W. A. (1984). *School context and school change: Implications for effective planning*. New York: Teachers College Press (Chapters I, II, and VIII).

Session I. Context & Change

Masters for Handouts

Local School Conditions 35

Life Cycle of an Improvement Project 37

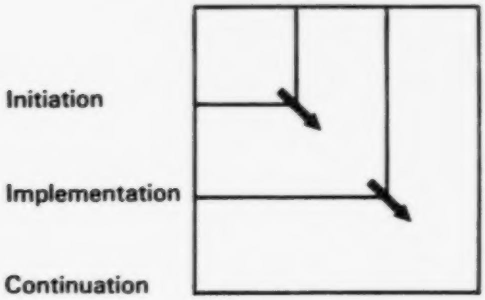
Roadmap for an Improvement Project 39

Eight Local School Conditions that Affect an Improvement Project

- **Resources**
  Time, money, materials
- **Incentives**
  Rewards and punishments for participation
- **Linkages**
  Interdependence among individuals and/or subunits
- **Priorities**
  Conflict or congruence of improvement with existing goals
- **Factions**
  Tensions among formal or informal groups
- **Turnover and Disruption**
  Arrivals and departures of key staff and/or dramatic change in routine
- **Current Practices**
  Discrepancy between current practices or behaviors and those required
- **Prior Projects**
  Legacy of previous improvement efforts

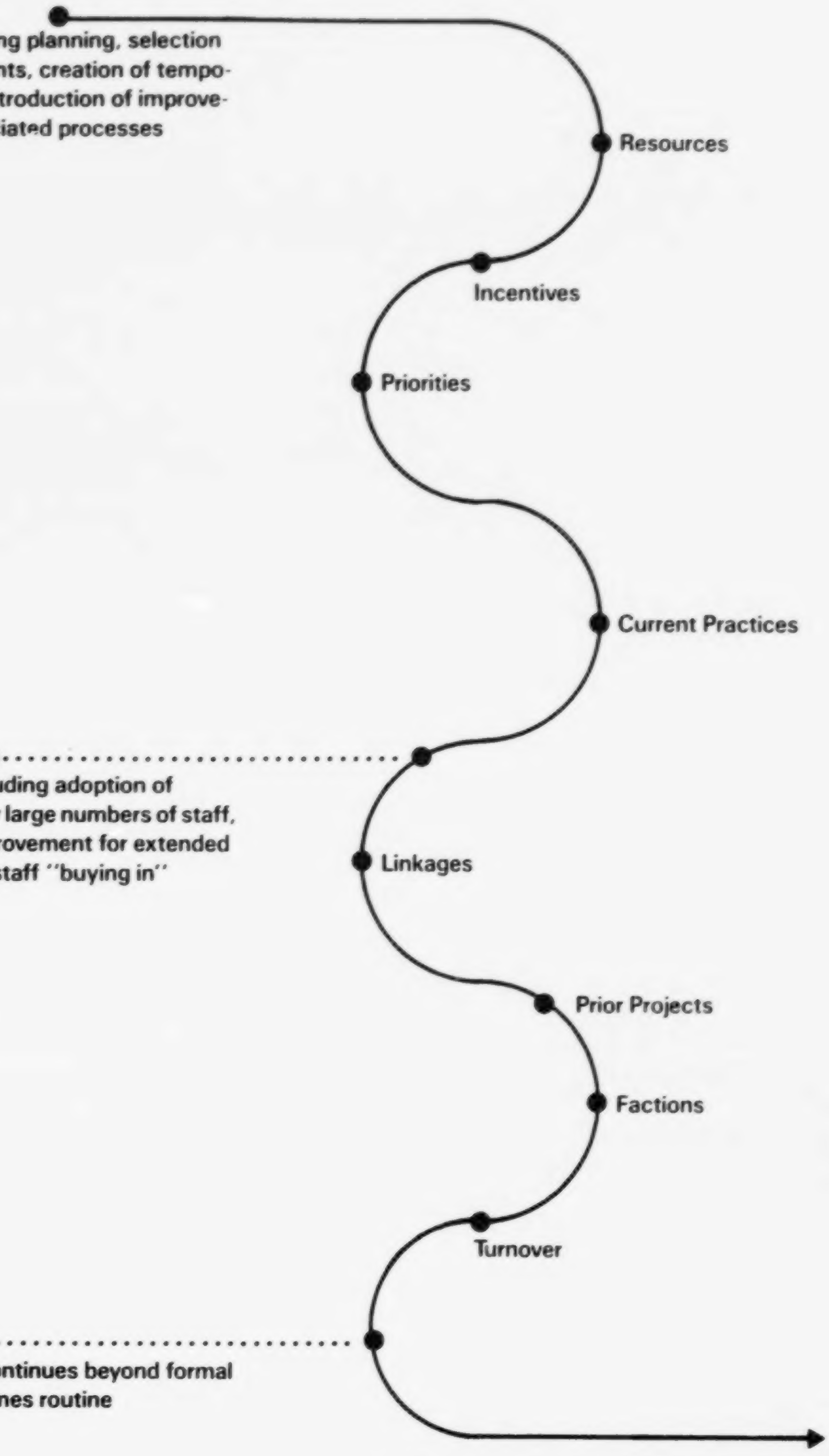
Life Cycle of an Improvement Project

- **Initiation**
  Start-up, including planning, selection of key participants, creation of temporary linkages, introduction of improvement and associated processes
- **Implementation**
  Installation, including adoption of improvement by large numbers of staff, staff trying improvement for extended period of time, staff "buying in"
- **Continuation**
  Improvement continued beyond formal activities; becomes routine



Road Map for an Improvement Project

Initiation
Start-up including planning, selection of key participants, creation of temporary linkages, introduction of improvement and associated processes


Resources
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Priorities
Current Practices
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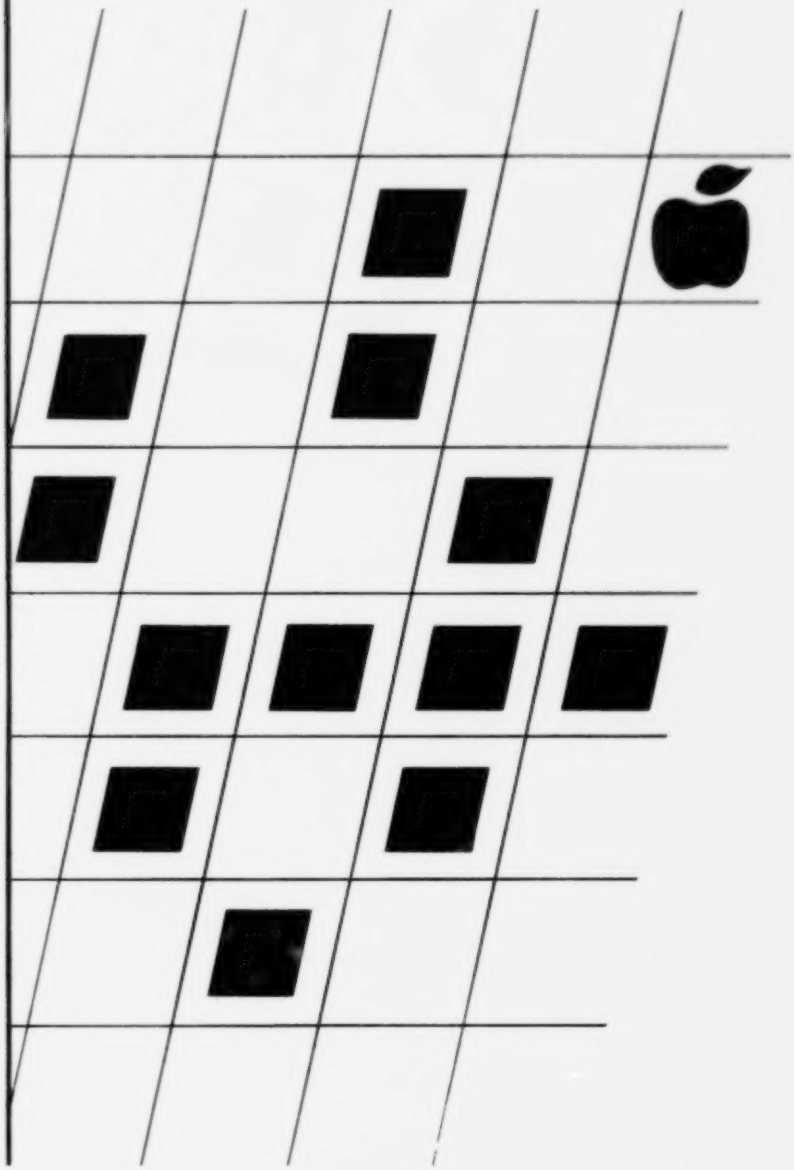
Prior Projects
Factions
Turnover

Implementation
Installation including adoption of improvement by large numbers of staff, staff trying improvement for extended period of time, staff "buying in"

Continuation
Improvement continues beyond formal activities; becomes routine

CONTEXT & CHANGE

II.



Session II: Site Influences on the Field Agent

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Field Agent Effectiveness: Presentation Outline 47

Field Agent Effectiveness: Presentation Narrative 48

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Trainer's Overview

GOALS:

1. To define characteristics/responsibilities of an effective field agent and to define aspects of the field agent's role.

2. To identify specific features of school context that affect field agent behavior, including the availability of resources, intra-staff tension, uncertainties of the daily routine of a school, and staff expectations for the usefulness of external assistance.

3. To help participants anticipate the configuration of assistance activities that likely will be needed at a site.

MATERIALS:

1. Ideal Field Agent information sheet for Ideal Field Agent activity

2. Field agent vignettes for Ideal Field Agent activity

3. Field Agent Effectiveness and School Context presentation outline and narrative

4. "How Field Agents Compensated" handout for Ideal Field Agent activity

5. Case studies 1, 2, 3, for Adapting to Context activity.

PHYSICAL SETTING:

Theater style with provision for groups of 6-8 for skill development and case study activities.

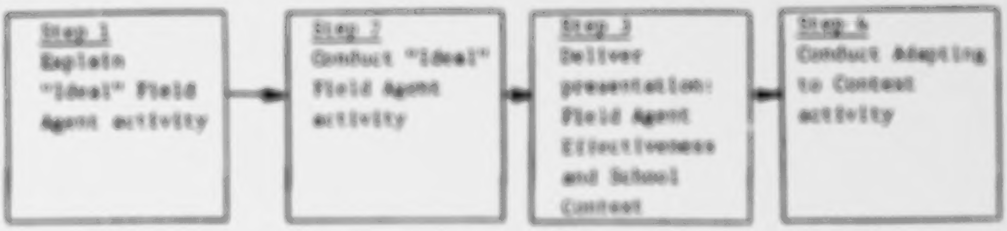
TRAINING SEQUENCE AND TIME REQUIRED:

1. The "Ideal" Field Agent skill development activity and discussion... 30 - 45 minutes

2. Field Agent Effectiveness and School Context presentation...30 - 45 minutes

3. Adapting to Context case study activity and discussion... 30 - 45 minutes

TRAINING STEPS:


Step 1
Explain "Ideal" Field Agent activity
Step 2
Conduct "Ideal" Field Agent activity
Step 3
Deliver presentation: Field Agent Effectiveness and School Context
Step 4
Conduct Adapting to Context activity

STEP SUGGESTIONS:

Step 1 Explain to participants that this session begins with a three-part skill development activity designed to get them thinking about the characteristics and roles they think are most valuable for a field agent.

Step 2 Conduct the "Ideal" Field Agent skill development activity as follows.

a. DISTRIBUTE INFORMATION SHEETS for participants to fill out. On the information sheet, "characteristics" refer to individual skills, knowledge, and attitudes; "responsibilities" refer to the field agent's formal duties; and "role" refers to the sets of expectations for field agent behavior held by the constellation of groups the agent works with and for.

b. TELL PARTICIPANTS you would like them to test their descriptions and definitions against three vignettes from the RDS study. That is, participants are to see if someone (1) with the characteristics they identified and (2) whose responsibilities are to be only those five listed could function in each of the situations.

c. READ EACH VIGNETTE SLOWLY, reminding participants of their task as defined in b.

d. ASK PARTICIPANTS TO DISCUSS the appropriateness of their lists of characteristics and responsibilities in relation to the vignettes.

e. GENERATE A DEFINITION of a field agent that can encompass all of the above: e.g., a field agent is someone who provides knowledge and materials to schools for the purpose of school improvement. Reiterate the critical point that in performing this rather general role, a wide variety of activities may be necessary. Thus, flexibility (the ability to adapt to, compensate for, and take advantage of idiosyncratic conditions found at a school) is the significant ingredient for effective field agent behavior. All of the information participants provide on the information sheet may be accurate, but probably only for some schools in some places at some times. This session focuses on the aspects of school context that necessitate flexibility in the activities a field agent actually carries out at a site.

Step 3 Deliver the presentation, Field Agent Effectiveness and School Context, using either the outline or narrative. Emphasize the following major points:

- field agents, unlike trainers, establish long term complex relationships with their clients
- there are no universally recognized "effective" field agent behaviors because what works in one situation does not necessarily work in another
- the most important function of field agents is to identify the unique barriers to improvement in a situation and to adjust project activities to negotiate these barriers.

Use "How Field Agents Compensated" handouts and transparencies as appropriate during the presentations.

Step 4 Conduct the Adapting to Context case study activity as follows.

a. EXPLAIN TO PARTICIPANTS that the purposes of this activity are for them to develop a profile of the "ideal" field agent's responsibilities and characteristics with reference to the contexts described in the case studies and to encourage them to look at the relationship between context and a field agent's approach to a situation.

b. DIVIDE PARTICIPANTS into groups of 6-8 individuals. Group them homogeneously, if possible, by the kinds of schools they are likely to serve.

c. DISTRIBUTE CASE STUDY DESCRIPTIONS to participants. All members of the group receive the same case study. After reading the case study, members should discuss the characteristics, roles, and responsibilities best suited for the situations described in the case study. Then, as a group, they should develop a profile of the "ideal" field agent for the case study situation. Pass out blank copies of the Information Sheet used in the opening activity. They may also want to compare this profile with the profile developed in the introductory activity, if this activity was done. Tell them they will be asked to report on their task and progress at the end of the activity.

d. BEGIN THE ACTIVITY and facilitate group processes (e.g., keep group members on task, clarify concepts, provide information, help adjudicate differences). As they begin to develop a profile of the "ideal" field agent, group members should select a recorder. Also, if they think it will help the process, they should select a group leader. Keep reminding them of the time.

e. STOP THE ACTIVITY and have the participants report on their progress. This report should include a brief description of the case study situation and of the "ideal" field agent profile which the group developed. They should be encouraged to comment on the ease or difficulty of working at the site, i.e., problems the field agent will encounter. Participants may also be asked to comment on discrepancies between the "ideal" field agent profile for the site and their own particular notions of what it takes for a field agent to be effective--as well as on differences in the ideal which may surface as the discussion moves from site to site.

Three Vignettes From a Field Agent's Day

Below are incidents from a day in the life of three different field agents, written by a researcher attending the meeting. Read them and judge whether someone with the characteristics and responsibilities identified on the Information Sheet could handle these situations.

1. We were there at 9:30 a.m. and, as usual, no one else was. The director of the cafeteria had had a heart attack so the RBS field agent had a bit of a hassle getting coffee for the meeting. The field agent did go out and buy donuts this time and got some chocolate milk for the non-coffee drinkers, but there were still some requests for tea. About 10:45 a.m., the meeting began with the local coordinator reviewing what had happened the week before. The coordinator said, "I don't know how many of you got copies of the goal statement...." At this point, I looked around and I didn't see any copies of the goal statement on the table. The field agent had asked the coordinator to get copies of the goal statement made and the coordinator apparently was afraid to go into the principal's office to do that. So the field agent went in and talked one of the secretaries into doing it.

2. The meeting's main presentation was to be done by the assistant principal, not by RBS. The field agent had given the assistant principal the linker's manual to use in putting the talk together. The meeting was scheduled to start at 3:15. People milled around for a while, and about 3:15 the superintendent kind of looked around at people and said, "Dearly beloved", (drawing laughs from everyone). Later, the superintendent said the meeting went very well and the field agent agreed. A couple of people complimented the assistant principal on the talk.

3. We arrived at about 8:30. The field agent greeted me with a disconcerted frown--three teachers [out of five on the team] were absent that day. The field agent had spent some time before the session in the faculty lounge and got the feeling that teachers were upset with the principal about something. Moreover, the janitor had mistaken the field agent for a planning team teacher's substitute and said that the teacher had left the day before saying, "I am never coming back to this school." The field agent wanted to delay the meeting (beyond 9:10 a.m.) to wait for the principal, who was in the office with somebody, but decided to go ahead because it wasn't clear when the principal would arrive. Later, after the meeting, the field agent suggested that the teachers are afraid to discuss things in front of the principal. The field agent went on to point out that the teacher who asked who would be doing the observing did so when she knew the principal was not in the room.

Field Agent Effectiveness and School Context: Presentation Outline

A. What is a field agent? (distribute HANDOUT on What is a Field Agent)

1. Length of involvement
2. Formal roles
3. Range of informal activities
4. Planning mode
5. Initiative
6. Accountability

B. School contextual factors that affected role (distribute HANDOUT on Context and Behavior)

1. Intended role
2. Summary of four context factors
3. Expanded functions
4. Context and functions
5. Determining field agent effectiveness

C. Lessons to be learned

1. Increasing responsibility may be necessary
2. Fit project activities to school seasons
3. Don't ignore the effects of planning on school tensions
4. Plan for uncertainty
5. Decide on the boundaries for your behavior

Field Agent Effectiveness and School Context: Presentation Narrative

A field agent goes into a site with expectations about the ultimate goals of the project and about the process the site will go through to accomplish these objectives. The critical point to remember for field agents and those who supervise them is that the process may have to be altered to attain the goals. This presentation highlights contextual conditions that necessitate such alterations.

What is a Field Agent?

At the outset, it is important to make sure we're clear about what is a "field agent." For us, field agents provide a variety of sustained technical assistance functions over a relatively long period of contact with a site. A field agent may be a teacher, principal, central office staff person, or representative of an external agency; but the common thread, regardless of who the field agent is, is that the person assists the site through the entire change process. As we said in Session One, researchers generally divide the change process into three phases: initiation, implementation, and continuation. During initiation, a school assesses its current level of operation, determines how it would like to be, gauges the discrepancy, and decides how to move from the present state to the desired one. Having accomplished this, school staff typically test the information or use their new skills during implementation and continuation. Field agents work at the site from the very beginning of the initiation phase--that is, starting with assessment and goal setting--through implementation, at least. So, field agents spend much time with school staff, and they also get involved in a variety of complex organizational events.

Partially a consequence of this, field agents tend to adopt a wide range of formal roles. For example, Philip Piele in "Review and Analysis of the Role, Activities, and Training of Educational Linking Agents" (ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management: Eugene, OR, 1975) describes three frequently adopted technical assistance roles as resource finder, process helper, and solution giver. The resource finder is a kind of knowledge broker--someone who links external expertise with a site and has little, if any, involvement in subsequent change activities or decisions. The process helper actively identifies a school's problems by helping to collect and analyze data, but remains neutral with respect to decisions about which problems the school addresses and about remedies to those problems. The solution giver actively advocates remedies to the school's problems and may follow up to see how implementation is going. Field agents often fill all three of these roles and--as we will see--others, as well.

The field agent also engages in a wide range of informal activities. Although none of these informal activities looks very important when examined in isolation, taken as a whole they represent a significant investment in field agent time and energy. We will shortly talk about informal activities in greater detail; for the moment, however, it suffices to say that these informal activities require field agents to have considerable contact with the client school. And herein lies much of the importance of such activities. The more contact someone has with a school, the more opportunity there is to see something going wrong and to fix it. On the other hand, this increased opportunity to see something going wrong--this chance to see gliches and gaffes--often causes a problem for the field agent. Does he or she sit back and wait for site staff to remedy the situation, or does he or she become actively involved in matters that are formally only the site's business? Our experience suggests that the resolution of this question goes a long way toward determining the difference between project success and failure. At least during initiation, the effective field agent does whatever is necessary to ensure that the process continues. Ideally someone at the site should do this, but we all know that commitment to an innovation takes time to develop, and while it is developing the process must continue. It is often the field agent who must see to this by doing, as we said, whatever needs to be done. Indeed, the effective field agent assumes that everything is negotiable up to a point, including the process, the participants, the problem, and the prospective changes. The field agent's major responsibility is to do everything possible to keep the process moving as long as there is a glimmer of hope that beneficial outcomes will occur.

Context and Initiation

Field agents were the major point of contact between RBS and the schools. They were frequently in touch with the sites (at least five times a month in person, over the phone, or through the mail) and worked with the local planning team at each school. The agents' technical assistance functions were: (1) to promote program improvement by bringing knowledge about successful educational practices and the change process to schools, (2) to help local staff develop the capability to direct the change process themselves, and (3) to provide feedback to RBS' development specialists about necessary program revisions. In terms of Piele's conception of agent roles, RBS' agents most closely resembled the process helper.

Our documentation of field agents' experiences in the 14 schools indicates that four categories of contextual conditions affected the field agents' activities during initiation.

1. The availability of resources to support project activities, particularly staff time, staff knowledge of the program's content area, and clerical help.
2. The extent of tension among staff factions.
3. The amount of staff turnover and disruptions to the school's daily routines.
4. Staff expectations about the usefulness of external assistance, based largely on their experiences in previous projects involving such assistance.

Although in each school field agents performed the three technical functions described above (bringing knowledge, building capacity, and informing program revisions), at times some agents had to supplement these in order to respond to these school contextual conditions. They did this by expanding their process-helping activities to include: (1) leading meetings, solely planning school meetings, and writing funding proposals for the school; (2) making ad hoc adjustments in the process at a specific site--apart from changes that RBS' developers made in the programs as a whole; (3) providing clerical support like typing, duplicating, obtaining audio-visual equipment, or arranging for refreshments; (4) seeking periodic re-endorsements of the project from new administrators; and (5) mediating the effects of intrastaff tensions.

The second handout demonstrates how the four categories of local conditions related to the five categories of extra field agent activities in the RBS projects. As the graphic shows, RBS' field agents compensated for low levels of resources--especially constraints on principals' time to participate and periodic drains on staff energy brought on by cyclical busy periods--by expanding process-helping (at seven schools), making idiosyncratic adjustments in the process (at seven schools), or providing clerical services (at five schools). Acute outbreaks of intrastaff tension necessitated mediating their effects on staff and the project at five sites (and, in two instances, led to adjusting the process). Two activities undertaken in response to high levels of staff turnover and other unexpected but routine disruptions in school life were expanding process-helping (at three schools) and seeking new project endorsements (at three schools). Staff expectations for field agents posed special problems at three urban sites and were treated by adjusting the change process. At the other sites, staff seemed to suspend their attitudes about previous projects, adopting a more neutral posture toward field agents. In these cases, expectations did not compel new activities so much as they reinforced particular activities once RBS' agents performed them.

Since local conditions differ among schools, behavior that is effective for helping initiation along in one site may not be terribly useful in another. Thus, no real recipes can be written. Field agents must be able to think on their feet and adjust their behavior as necessary to counterbalance, compensate for, or accommodate to barriers to school change. Empirically, it would be desirable to examine whether school change was ultimately more successful at a school where an agent matched his or her behavior to the site than where an agent did not. Realistically, though, it must be recognized that an individual's impact on a school is also subject to context. It is muted by the attitudes, beliefs, and actions of other school members as they pursue their own purposes. In our study, the importance of the RBS field agents resided not in their influence on final outcomes but rather in their ability to keep the process moving and to create conditions that increased the probability that the process would lead to the attainment of desired final outcomes.

Several lessons can be drawn from the RBS experience. Although not a recipe, consider the following.

- Principals do not have a lot of time to nurse a project along. A process-helping field agent is going to have to increase his or her responsibility for leading a project, especially if principals are the major contact people.
- Schools have a rhythm which is almost impossible to fight. The timing of project activities to fit with school seasons is important. Otherwise, the process may have to be adjusted significantly.
- Factions are a fact of life. The planning process may increase opportunities for already-existing tensions to surface. A field agent may have to sacrifice some planning precepts for peace.
- School life is routinely disrupted. A field agent should not count too heavily on certain conditions being present for any particular activity. A plan for contingencies is necessary.
- Act the way you want to be treated. School expectations typically reinforce field agent activities once performed; thus, a field agent should not do something once, if he or she is not willing to do it again.

Suggested Reading

Corbett, H. D., Dawson, J. A., and Firestone, W. A. (1984). School context and school change: Implications for effective planning. New York: Teachers College Press (Chapters I, II, and VIII).

Louis, K. S. (1981). External agents and knowledge utilization: Dimensions for analysis and action. In R. Lehming and M. Kane (Eds.), Improving schools: Using what we know. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage (pp. 168-211).

Session II. Site Influences on the Field Agent

Masters for Handouts

Information Sheet: The "Ideal" Field Agent 57

How Field Agents Compensated 59

Adapting to Context Case Studies 61

Information Sheet

The Ideal Field Agent

List five *characteristics* you think are *most important* for the successful field agent when working in a school.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

List five *responsibilities* that are *most important* for a successful field agent to assume when working in a school.

1.

2.

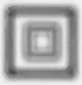
3.

4.

5.

Briefly define the role "field agent" as you see it.

How Field Agents Compensated

Contextual Condition		Field Agent Compensation
Low Levels of Resources		**Expand the Process** ◦ provide more help
		Adjust the Process ◦ add, delete, or rearrange activities ◦ reassign activities or responsibilities, or expand roles ◦ compress activities, or timelines
		Provide Clerical Services ◦ typing ◦ photocopying
Intrastaff Tension		**Expand the Process** ◦ provide more help
		Adjust the Process ◦ add, delete, or rearrange activities ◦ reassign activities or responsibilities, or expand roles ◦ compress activities or timelines
		Mediate Effects ◦ mollify staff ◦ buffer staff ◦ buffer project
Unexpected Disruptions/ Staff Turnover		**Expand the Process** ◦ provide more help
		Seek Endorsements ◦ bring new staff on ◦ obtain renewed commitment ◦ bring in previously uninvolved staff
Expectations Based on Past Experiences		**Adjust the Process** ◦ add, delete, or rearrange activities ◦ reassign activities or responsibilities, or expand roles ◦ compress or expand activities or timelines

P Project
T Teacher
▲ Task
▯ ▯ ▯ Time

Case Study I: Greendale High School

Greendale is a high school located in a small community where farming and small manufacturing firms are the primary industries. You have been asked to assist the school in developing a new program that emphasizes the use of reading and writing skills in all subject areas. You have accomplished this in four large high schools successfully and have become committed to several strategies to promote this kind of program. First, it is important to involve at least one teacher from every subject area in initial planning. Two, planning is initiated only when the principal agrees to tell all faculty members that everyone in the school will be responsible for implementing the new program. Three, to give the project momentum, planning must be finished during the winter so that new practices can be implemented in the spring.

Greendale itself is a somewhat small high school, having 38 regular classroom teachers spread across 11 subject areas, three of which consist of only two teachers. This poses problems occasionally. There are few substitutes available, so absences mean that other teachers have to double up classes or use their planning periods to cover them. In small departments, teachers often feel overworked. The principal is generally enthusiastic about school improvement efforts and is firmly committed to providing the staff opportunities to grow as professionals. He also strongly feels that what staff do with the opportunities is up to them. This reluctance to interfere in teacher classroom decisions has been reinforced by an increasingly aggressive teachers' union. In fact, the union had threatened the first strike in the school's history during the fall. As a result, the administrators in the district decided to wait until March to initiate any new projects to let tensions subside and wounds heal.

Case Study 2: Boulevard Junior High School

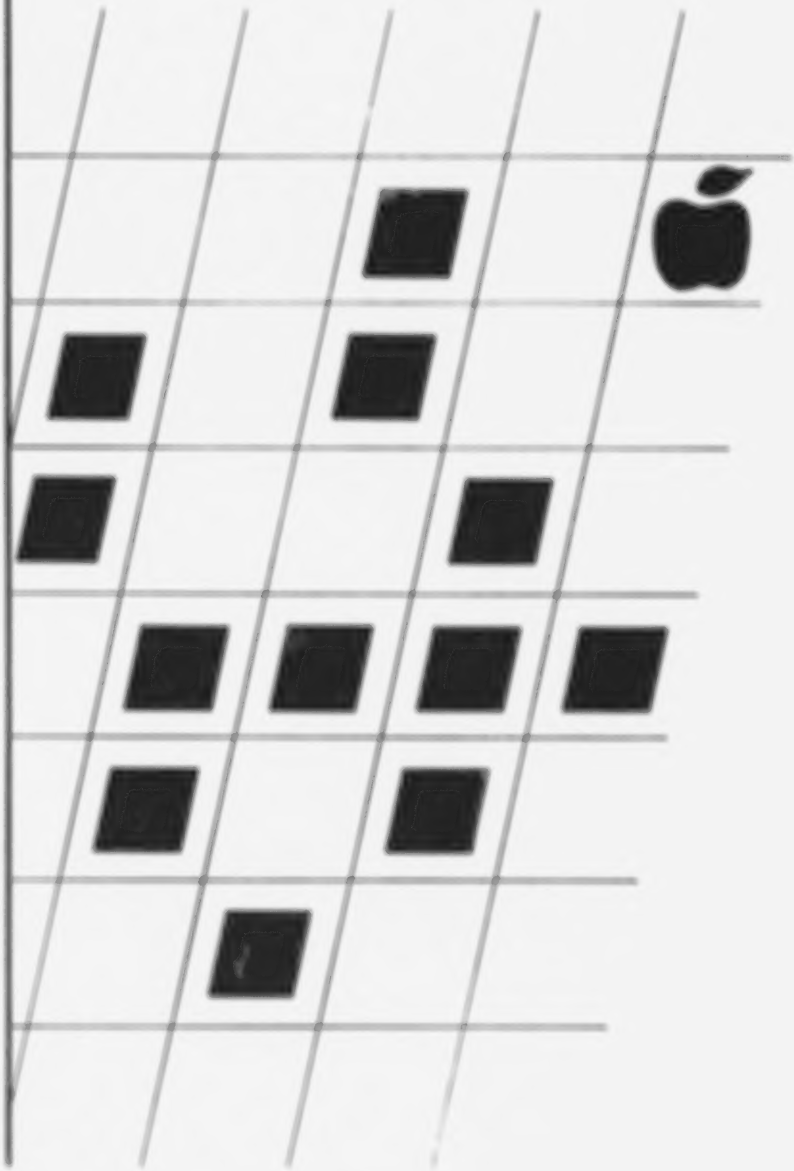
The principal at Boulevard Junior High called you to help the school start a new program emphasizing math skills in the three other major academic subject areas: English, social studies, and science. One of the science teachers has been appointed by the principal to direct the project; you are wanted because of your expertise in intermediate grade math and to informally help keep the planning process going as smoothly as possible. Actually, the principal is not hopeful that the project will be a success under teacher leadership, but three conditions make it necessary. First, the principal is frequently out of the building and does not have the time to run the project. Second, as is the case in many such urban schools, the teachers are wary of outsiders coming in offering technical assistance. Third, because the teachers' contract forbids meetings after school, only someone working in the school can make all the arrangements needed to organize a meeting during school time. According to the principal, not everyone gets the word about forthcoming events even under this system.

Case Study 3: Smith Elementary School

You have just started working in a reading skills project at Smith Elementary, located in a large industrial city. The program has been developed at a large university and is now being disseminated to individual schools as pilot sites. The intent is for the program to receive district-wide adoption after the initial trial at Smith. The core of the program relies on providing training to administrators who, in turn, are to train teachers. It is felt that this will help build local commitment to the project and develop a local capacity to instruct new teachers in the school. Consequently your major job is to train the Smith principal; secondarily you will attend meetings in which the principal trains the small groups of teachers.

However, you have begun to sense that the project may not go as intended. Upon your arrival at the school today, the school secretary informed you that the superintendent who had approved the project had resigned at the end of the previous week. This was not totally unexpected, but the likely successor is not enthusiastic about adopting programs developed outside the school. As you ponder this, you half-listen to the principal begin the planning meeting. All of a sudden, your ears pick up the words, "So I will leave you in the hands of our expert." All heads turn your way as the principal hurriedly leaves the room. Even more surprising is the first comment made by one of the teachers: "I'm glad you're leading the meeting because I'm afraid to talk about how I teach when the principal is in the room."

CONTEXT & CHANGE



III.

Session III: .Planning and Participation

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Trainer's Overview

GOALS:

1. To identify specific features of school context that affect sequential planning and effective staff participation.

2. To help participants anticipate local school conditions that might act as barriers to effective planning and staff participation.

MATERIALS:

1. Planning presentation outline and narrative

2. Neckties for the Planning Game activity

3. Participation presentation outline and narrative

4. "Problems of and Prospects for Participation" handout for Participation presentation.

5. Newsprint and markers or chalkboard and chalk for Barriers, Solutions, Incentives, and Disincentives activity

PHYSICAL SETTING:

Theater or classroom style with provision for physical activity by the small groups as they play the planning game.

TRAINING SEQUENCE AND TIME REQUIRED:

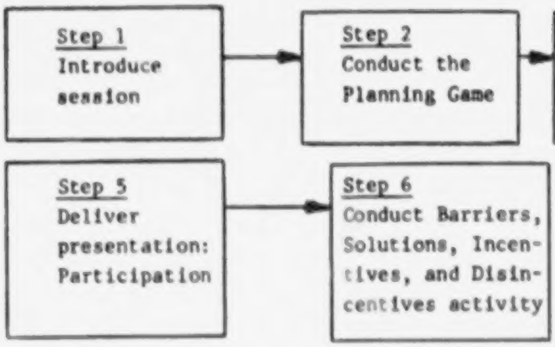
1. The Planning Game skill development activity and discussion...
   30 - 45 minutes

2. Planning presentation...
   20 - 30 minutes

3. Participation presentation...
   30 - 45 minutes

4. Barriers, Solutions, Incentives, and Disincentives skill development activity and discussion...
   30 - 45 minutes

TRAINING STEPS:


Step 1
Introduce session
Step 2
Conduct the Planning Game
Step 3
Deliver presentation: Planning
Step 4
Answer questions, clarify concepts
Step 5
Deliver presentation: Participation
Step 6
Conduct Barriers, Solutions, Incentives, and Disincentives activity

STEP SUGGESTIONS:

Step 1 Introduce the participants to this session by explaining that the point of the first skill development activity is to get them thinking about planning as an overworked process.

Step 2 Divide the participants into groups of 6-8 individuals and conduct the Planning Game with them as follows:

a. EXPLAIN THE PLANNING game to participants.

b. MAKE SURE EACH TEAM HAS A NECKTIE to use for the game.

c. DESIGNATE A FIELD AGENT who will act as the person who approves the action plans.

d. BEGIN THE PLANNING PHASE by telling the teams they have 10 minutes to develop their action plans.

e. STOP THE TEAMS after 10 minutes and check their action plans. Check them for completeness only. If any are incomplete instruct the team to finish them.

f. BEGIN THE IMPLEMENTATION PHASE by telling the teams they have one minute to carry out the action plan.

g. STOP THE TEAMS after one minute, declare the winner, and debrief the activity. Use the following questions to guide the debriefing discussion.

- Was this the best way to accomplish the task? Why?
- How did field agents/planners/implementers feel about their roles and responsibilities?
- How did implementers feel about the action plans?
- How did planners/implementers feel about field agents and vice versa?
- How did planners feel about the way implementers carried out the plans?

Step 3 Deliver the presentation, "Planning, using this discussion as a springboard. Use either the outline or narrative and emphasize the following major points:

- too often there is an imbalance in the amount of time and energy devoted to planning vs. implementation
- the products of extensive planning are often ignored or modified to suit contextual conditions
- excessive planning is often a waste of time and effort
- efforts to conduct logical planning aimed at adoption of a change often run into difficulty.

Step 4 Answer questions and clarify concepts about planning. Perhaps give participants a short break.

Step 5 Deliver the presentation "Participation," using either the outline or narrative. Emphasize the following major points:

- although staff participation is an important ingredient in effecting change, it can harm a project's chances of success
- too much involvement, especially if it seems to become burdensome to teachers, can serve as a disincentive to change.

Step 6 Conduct the "Barriers, Solutions, Incentives, and Disincentives" skill development activity as follows.

a. REPRODUCE THE CHART entitled "Problems of and Prospects for Participation" on newsprint, a chalkboard, or an overhead transparency, leaving plenty of space to fill it in. Explain that this activity will help participants apply concepts from the Participation presentation to their current or future situations. If the participants are not currently working on a project or expecting to work on one in the near future, have them use past experiences during the activity. If they have never been field agents, have them rely on their knowledge of schools and school districts.

b. EXPLAIN TO PARTICIPANTS that they are to think about a current, upcoming, or past school improvement project with which they are involved and describe the barriers to staff participation that are in evidence. In describing these barriers, they should explain also why they are barriers. See that each barrier is listed on the chart.

c. HAVE THE PARTICIPANTS DESCRIBE SOLUTIONS that have been or could be used to overcome the barriers. Again, they should explain the reasons for selecting a solution. If a particular solution has actually been tried by a participant, the person should share the results. List solutions next to the barriers on the chart.

d. ASK PARTICIPANTS TO CONSIDER THE INCENTIVES OR DISINCENTIVES that might be present in the solutions they list. If they recognize disincentives, have them suggest ways to change them into incentives. If they recognize incentives, have them suggest ways to capitalize on them. Put these on the chart, as well.

The Planning Game

OBJECT: To be the first team to tie a necktie without a mirror so that the tie ends are even.

PLAYERS: There are three types of players:

- the planners
- the implementer
- the field agent.

The field agent selects one team member to be the implementer. It is this player's responsibility to actually tie the tie. All other team members are planners. They are responsible for developing an action plan for tying the tie. The field agent is responsible for making sure that the action plan is complete and that the implementer follows it.

THE ACTION PLAN: The action plan is to be a comprehensive set of step-by-step instructions for tying a tie without using a mirror. It is to be written by the planners. It must include the following:

- a goal statement
- a set of objectives
- a set of tasks keyed to each objective
- a timeline keyed to the objectives and tasks.

PLAY: Play begins with development of the action plan. Planners work cooperatively to fill in all of the necessary information. The field agent may help them any way necessary. Once the plan is developed, it must be checked for completeness and approved before being given to the implementer. All teams have the same amount of time to develop their action plans.

Once approved, the plan is given to the implementer to be carried out. The field agent may help the implementer follow the plan any way necessary. The first implementer to follow the action plan and tie the tie so that the ends are even wins the game.

Planning: Presentation Outline

A. Planning an educational innovation

  1. Perceived advantages of planning
  2. The downside of planning

B. The argument against planning too much

  1. bias for action
  2. The world is not rational
  3. A drain on resources

C. How experienced is the school in planning?

Planning:
Presentation Narrative

You can not get away from it. Everywhere you turn you run into a planning group, task force, commission, committee, or strategy meeting. This part of Session Three examines this ubiquitous behavior a little more closely.

Why Plan?

There are good reasons why we plan what we do ahead of time. For example, we want to make sure that the boat is not too big for the basement door. In change projects, we want to make sure that we decide on changes that are appropriate for the problem to be solved and for the people who are involved. We also know that planning provides the time we need to gain a greater commitment to the changes we want to happen and to gain a better understanding of the activities we want to undertake. Planning helps us recognize the need to change in the first place, by simply helping us make comparisons between what's desired and what's current.

But there is another side to the ledger. Planning can also be used as a vehicle for sharing the blame or hiding it. "I wasn't really in favor of doing that, but everyone else was so what could I have done?" is not an uncommon sentiment. Nor is, "I don't really remember how that decision was made." We have heard both quite a few times. It can also become an alternative to action, a way to present a facade of action that appeases dissident groups, and a way to postpone having to make a commitment. Nonetheless, it seems that planning is regarded in many organizations as a tool that is essential to their survival. Regardless of where one stands on the value of planning. It is clear that in education we spend too much time doing it. This is our opinion, but it's based on three reasons.

First, we have learned from business and industry that excellent companies are action oriented. They improve their products, technology, and service by trying ideas, not subjecting them to endless tests of feasibility. Indeed, Peters and Waterman, authors of In Search of Excellence, classify these companies' credo as "ready, fire, aim" or "do it, fix it, try it." Obviously, planning goes on in these companies, but it parallels action; it doesn't postpone action or preclude it altogether.

We mostly saw the situation from the other side in our research. That is, most schools had a bias against action and toward elaborate planning. Teachers recounted numerous tales of projects that had gotten underway with considerable fanfare, produced an action plan, and then disappeared. In these cases, "action plan" seems to be a contradiction in terms. Planning was a substitute for action, and anything that involved planning was assured of not being implemented. That attitude was a significant barrier for RBS' field agents, especially since they came into the schools with an elaborate planning model in hand. That was not necessarily a bad idea--you still have to plan--but it looked like all of the other non-productive projects teachers had seen.

Mark Twain's admonition not to take more wisdom from a situation than there is in it sums up our second reason for thinking that educators plan too much. He argued a cat will sit on a hot stove only once--but, after that, it will not sit on a cold one, either. The point is, there are limits to how much wisdom we can gain from forethought. Planners usually assume that the world is rational. But if the world is rational, why do we send thirteen year-olds to school, or bother sterilizing bottles for babies who spend most of the day being licked in the face by dogs and gumming week-old food embedded in the carpet? In fact, a plan usually bears little resemblance to what happens in reality precisely because the real world is not as predictable as we think it is.

This was certainly true in the schools where we worked. We found that people do not necessarily follow a planning model when they do things. If they hear about a good idea, they are likely to try it immediately instead of waiting for steps four, five, and six on the planning agenda. Thus, in reality, implementation begins at the same time as planning. You can ignore that fact and plan as if people weren't already acting, or you can acknowledge it, encourage it, and build the results of this mixed planning/implementing behavior into your planning activities.

As a corollary, we know that children learn best when they can see success and results; we think we can assume that adults work best when they, too, can see immediate concrete benefits coming from what they are doing. It is difficult for anyone to remain committed to an activity when the promise of real benefit is a year or two away. We are aware of the objection that placing too much emphasis on immediacy may lead to faddism and throwing babies out with the bath water. We aren't arguing for the extreme. All we are saying is: Build in some action early and break out of a strict adherence to a linear plan.

Our third reason for advocating less planning is linked to our concern about the scarcity of local resources. Too much planning erodes the one resource that people in schools do not have enough of—time. Time is limited, and time devoted to planning means there is less time available for doing. We found that teachers may be willing to give up a couple of prep periods and even a day or two of classes on occasion. Eventually this sacrifice infringes on their classroom effectiveness, however, and when it does the planning activity or what is being planned becomes a problem itself rather than a way to solve a problem.

This was particularly evident in our study. In the early stages, everyone managed to devote time to the projects. Meeting attendance was high for both teachers and administrators. As planning continued, however, substitutes hired to cover classes seemed to become less adequate, other projects seemed to need more attention, and day-to-day school crises seemed to become more pressing. Consequently, staff discovered what they considered to be valid reasons for not planning. Our interpretation is that too much time was being spent in planning. The projects' claim on an hour of staff time was no more compelling than the other fifteen claims being made for that hour. The goal of field agents, then, should be to complete planning well before this inevitable tapering off occurs, and avoid the situation of rarely getting to implementation. We will address the problem of time and how to get a little more of it when we discuss participation.

Before moving on, however, we would like to leave you with a final thought. Despite its ubiquity, staff in most schools do not know how to do effective planning. In many instances, conducting systematic planning is itself an organizational change. Thus, our concern with local capacity and our concern with fitting a change to the situation are appropriate when you think about initiating planning. It is worth spending some time finding out how skilled staff are in doing what it is the planning requires in the first place. We think part of the problem with planning may be that everyone assumes that most of us know how to do it. That may be true, but it seems to us that the way everyone knows how to do it is poorly.

Suggested Reading

Clark, D. L. (1981). In consideration of goal-free planning: The failure of traditional planning systems in education. Educational Administration Quarterly, 17(3), 42-60.

Corbett, H. D., Dawson, J. A., and Firestone, W. A. (1984). School context and school change: Implications for effective planning. New York: Teachers College Press (Chapters I, II, IV, and VIII).

Participation:
Presentation Outline

A. What is participation?

B. The rationale behind participation

  1. Commitment
  2. Local capacity
  3. Appropriateness of innovation
  4. Mixed results in the research literature

C. The influence of local context

  1. Availability of resources
  2. Incentives and disincentives

D. Mediating contextual influences

  1. Altering the nature of participation
     a. Using multiple groups
     b. Reducing the extent of participation
     c. Advisory meeting arrangements
     d. Involving fewer participants with time commitments
  2. Results of mediation on building commitment

Participation:
Presentation Narrative

After years of planning how to get around teachers, it has now become customary to involve the teachers who will be implementing an innovation in its early planning stages. Generally this involvement is a good thing, but there are still situations where its costs may hamper success. Participation of any kind diverts staff time and energy from regular duties. If demands are high and either the payoff is not easily visible--as often happens in planning--or regular responsibilities suffer--as can happen when planning becomes prolonged--then desired outcomes like local commitment, capacity, and adaptation may never occur. Thus, as field agents we must constantly balance the costs of participation with the benefits.

To take it a step farther and go against the common wisdom for a moment, there may be situations when teacher participation may not be a realistic expectation in schools, or at least times when it should not occur in the same form as it does ordinarily. It is a resource and incentives issue. The extent to which people are willing and able to become actively involved in educational innovation is influenced by the availability of resources and incentives/disincentives perceived by participants. Resources such as staff time to plan or money for hiring substitutes will always constrain the number of people who can be involved and for what length of time; and incentives and disincentives affect people's willingness to shift their energies to a project. Before exploring how to maximize participation and make it as effective as possible without burning teachers out, let us look a little more closely at the concept of participation itself.

The term participation refers to opportunities for staff and others to be involved in the process of making decisions about school improvement. The extent to which participants actually influence decisions can vary substantially. People may (1) simply provide information which others will use to make decisions, (2) voice opinions and make recommendations--which may or may not be taken into consideration, (3) vote upon or veto decisions suggested by administrators, or (4) make decisions with no distinction between themselves and administrators. The scope of these decisions can vary from ones that call for minor changes in a teacher's classroom to major school-wide policy changes.

Research suggests three fundamental reasons for involving local participants in planning. First, this kind of involvement increases people's commitment (or at least willingness) to spend the time and effort required to implement new practices and to continue them after initial incentives are withdrawn. Second, involvement in planning helps develop local capacity for implementation; that is, during planning people usually acquire the knowledge and skills needed to change their behavior to bring it in line with the requirements of the new practice. Third, local participation heightens the possibility that changes will be tailored to be appropriate in a particular setting.

Research on participation has been less clear about its effects. Some reviewers of the literature say that participation indeed helps create commitment and ownership. Others, however, claim that research findings are generally inconclusive. One reason for the inconsistency of research findings about participation may be that its effects, as well as the extent to which it can be carried out, vary among settings. We argue that school context has significant effects on participation and its intended benefits.

Availability of Resources

As anyone who has worked in a school well knows, participation in extra projects does not come cheaply. Trade-offs must continually be made between being involved and performing regular duties. How heavy those demands were, and the effects they had, varied among the schools RBS studied. Developing program plans was a lengthy process and time was scarce in all schools, although more so in some than others. The lack of sufficient time to attend meetings dampened both teachers' enthusiasm toward being involved with RBS and their willingness to continue. Most teachers were convinced that making classroom changes was important, yet they wanted to devote a limited amount of time to formal planning. Consequently, field agents and administrators occasionally decreased meeting time, carried out some planning tasks themselves or with smaller groups of teachers, and omitted or abbreviated some planning steps.

How administrators arranged for teachers to meet also had implications for the form and effects of participation. Several alternatives were used to free classroom teachers to attend meetings: (a) hiring substitutes, (b) asking non-participants to cover classes, and (c) holding meetings during "unassigned" times, e.g., planning periods, lunch periods, or after school.

Hiring substitutes, sometimes viewed by teachers and field agents as the preferred alternative because it released participants for large blocks of time, required monetary resources that were not available in most schools. And even when substitute teachers were available, their use did not always promote teachers' enthusiasm for participating. Teachers felt obligated to develop more precise lesson plans for substitutes than they themselves used and so had to spend more class preparation time than usual on meeting days. Also, teachers considered substitutes' instructional skills inadequate and consequently felt guilty about neglecting their students. Such pressures occasionally led teachers to urge that meetings be held less frequently. Sometimes it caused teachers to threaten to withdraw from projects. As a result, field agents reduced the number of meetings or shortened planning activities.

In several secondary schools, non-participants were asked to proctor classes during project meetings. To do so, they either sacrificed their own planning periods or, in one open-space building, taught two classes in adjacent spaces. This type of arrangement was an imposition on the non-participants and caused them to resent the projects. Participants were aware of this resentment and soon became anxious about the time they spent in meetings. Even worse, the resentment reduced the likelihood that projects would be disseminated successfully to the non-participating teachers.

Holding meetings during participants' free time meant that the meetings were brief, two hours at most and just 40 minutes in one school. Frequently, there was even less time than scheduled because participants arrived late or left early, or both. In addition, teachers simply did not like having to relinquish time they considered their own.

Basically, what the above discussion says is that in situations where teacher release time was either scarce or obtained at the expense of peers, participation served not as an incentive but as a disincentive for involvement. We will now turn our discussion to disincentives and incentives and the effect they have on change projects.

Incentives and Disincentives

Incentives. Incentives are the perceived benefits of engaging in some behavior; in the RBS schools a major incentive for participation was the probability of improved student achievement. Receiving favorable evaluations from administrators or avoiding negative evaluations was another set of incentives for participating. A third incentive might be called "professional contact." Participation sometimes enabled teachers and administrators to know and understand each other better, and it often gave them an opportunity to interact with outside professionals. A fourth incentive that attracted participants was the opportunity to influence decisions about changes which would affect them. And a fifth incentive for participation was the avoidance of negative sanctions for not meeting state requirements.

Disincentives. A major disincentive--a penalty for participation or a reward for nonparticipation--was project interference with teaching efficiency. As we have seen, this meant that the time and energy spent in meetings threatened people's abilities to carry out their other duties. A second disincentive to participants was the lack of expected benefits. This had less to do with the RBS projects and more with experiences potential participants had had in previous projects. Many had taken part in similar efforts and had seen few positive outcomes. Still another disincentive was aggravated or strained relations with peers. Non-participants resented having to give up planning time to cover classes while team members attended meetings, for example. This situation became even worse when project meetings ended half-way through a class period and non-participating teachers watched planning team members leave for lunch early.

Making the Most of Participation

Local participation in change projects requires considerable time and energy. We hope that is clear by now. The extent to which people are willing and able to devote themselves to such projects is influenced by the availability of resources and the incentives and disincentives participants perceive. We hope that's also clear. Fortunately for field agents, participation can be adjusted in several ways to reduce the influence of these school contextual factors without seriously impairing the development of local commitment to the project. An especially effective way to do this is to establish multiple participant groups. Sub-groups of a planning team can carry out tasks far more efficiently than the larger team in most cases and can accelerate the accomplishment of specific tasks. Sub-group members can follow through on separate planning tasks or portions of a project, conduct classroom-level planning, or be trained for project leadership. Other adjustments to the planning process include reducing the extent of participation by eliminating part of the process or conducting it outside the school, for example, at an external agency. Also, meeting times can be adjusted to fit participants' schedules. Finally, the composition of planning teams can be altered to reduce the number of participants with full-time assignments.

These methods of reducing the penalties of participation do not seem to lessen its beneficial effects on commitment. Nevertheless, field agents must consider the potential consequences of adjustments when deciding whether to make them. The key is to keep the balance tipped in favor of benefits. Too much concentration on just the costs to participants could, in some instances, also remove the benefits.

Suggested Reading

Conway, J. A. (1984). The myth, mystery, and mastery of participative decision-making in education. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *20*(3), 11-40.

Corbett, H. D., Dawson, J. A., and Firestone, W. A. (1984). *School context and school change: Implications for effective planning*. New York: Teachers College Press (Chapters I, II, V, and VIII).

Session III. Planning and Participation

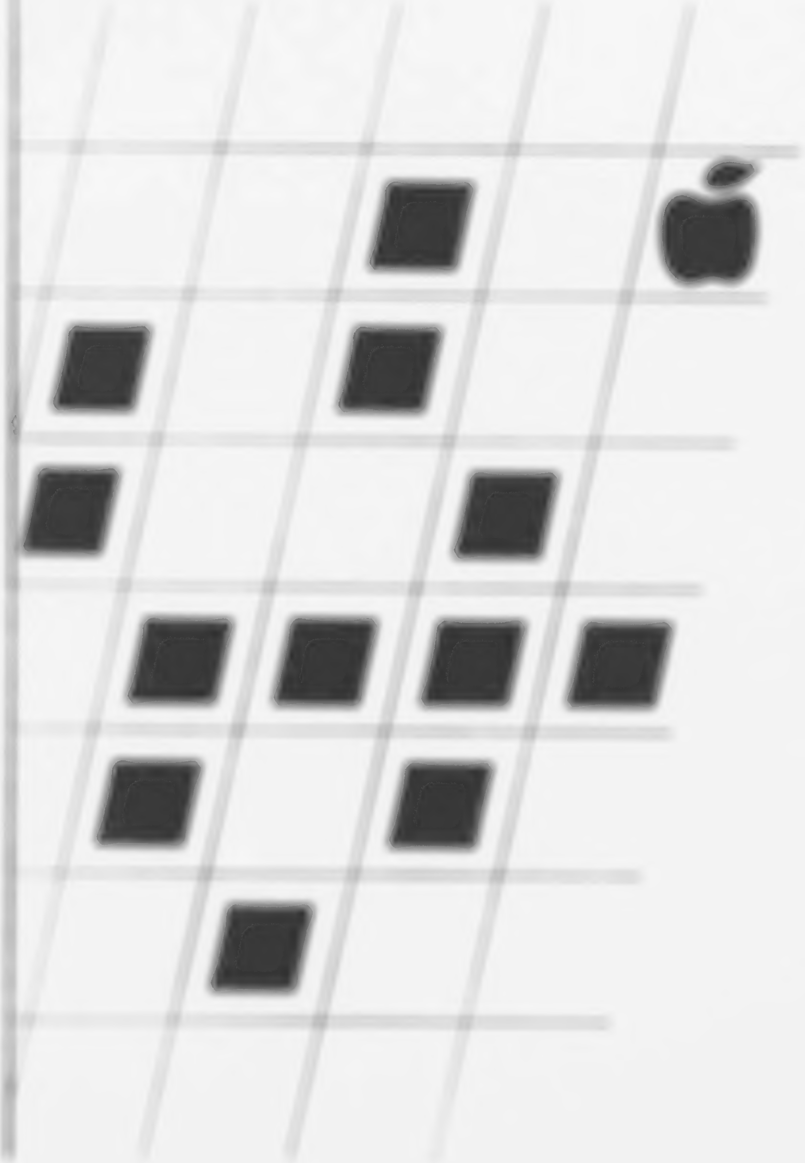
Master for Handouts

Problems of and Prospects for Participation 89

Problems of and
Prospects for
Participation

Barrier	Solution	Disincentives?	Incentives?

CONTEXT &
CHANGE



IV

Session IV: Spreading Change

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Trainer's Overview

GOALS:

1. To define the concept of structural linkage, its indicators, and its effects on implementation.

2. To identify strategies for promoting implementation in schools with different kinds and degrees of linkage.

MATERIALS:

1. "A Tale of Two Teams" case studies

2. Implementation presentation outline and narrative

3. "Assessing Linkages" handout for implementation presentation

4. "Creating Temporary Linkages" handout for implementation presentation

5. "Matching Strategies and Linkage" handout for implementation presentation

6. "Identifying Linkages" case studies

7. "[illegible] Examples" case studies for Building Structures activity

8. "School Description Sheet" for Creating the Best Linkage System activity

PHYSICAL SETTING:

Theater or classroom style with provision for small group work in groups of 4 - 8 with a focal point for the presentation.

TRAINING SEQUENCE AND TIME REQUIRED:

1. A Tale of Two Teams case study activity and discussion...
   [illegible] minutes

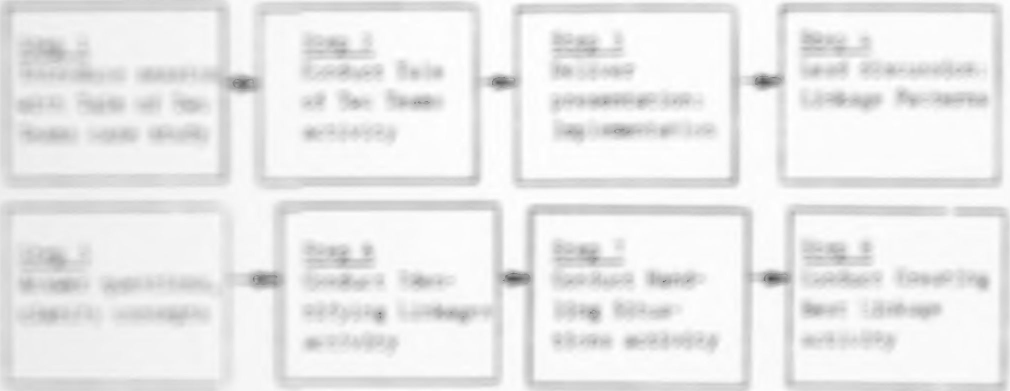
2. Implementation presentation...
   [illegible] minutes

3. Identifying Linkages case study activity and discussion...
   20 - 30 minutes

4. Handling Situations case study and discussion...
   20 - 30 minutes

5. Creating the Best Linkage System skill development activity and discussion ...
   30 - 45 minutes

TRAINING STEPS:


Step 1
Introduce session with Tale of Two Teams case study
Step 2
Conduct Tale of Two Teams activity
Step 3
Deliver presentation: Implementation
Step 4
Lead discussion: Linkage Patterns
Step 5
Answer questions, clarify concepts
Step 6
Conduct Identifying Linkages activity
Step 7
Conduct Handling Situations activity
Step 8
Conduct Creating Best Linkage activity

STEP DESCRIPTIONS:

Step 1 Tell participants you want to introduce the major concept of this session by having them analyze two true stories about implementation among teachers on two teams in the same school.

Step 2 Conduct "Tale of Two Teams" case study activity as follows.

a. DISTRIBUTE COPIES of the "Tale of Two Teams" and ask participants to read them.

b. ASK PARTICIPANTS TO EXPLAIN how change spread widely in one team and not in the other. Rule out likely but not accurate explanations that educators typically use like motivations of participants and school differences. Offer the major explanation that the degree of spread was the result of how the teams were organized. In one, teachers worked closely together; in the other, not at all. Also emphasize that these differences were within the same school, thus setting up the point that within school organization can vary as much as across school organization.

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Step 3 Deliver the presentation "Implementation," using this discussion as a springboard. Use either the outline or the narrative and emphasize the following points:

- examples of what linkages look like in practice
- the greater the linkages, the more widespread is implementation
- subunits vary as to their organizational patterns.

Use handouts and transparencies as appropriate during the presentation.

Step 4 As you end the presentation, engage participants in a discussion of different ways to identify and assess linkage patterns. In this discussion highlight the following:

- examples of strategies for gathering information about linkages
- examples of indicators of different kinds of linkage patterns
- examples of strategies for creating temporary, tight linkage patterns in situations characterized by loose linkage.

Step 5 Answer questions and clarify concepts about implementation and linkages. Perhaps give participants a short break.

Step 6 Conduct the "Identifying Linkages" case study activity as follows.

a. TELL THE GROUP(s) you are going to give them examples of interpersonal relationships and organizational patterns in schools and distribute the three case studies.

b. EXPLAIN THAT FOR EACH EXAMPLE, each participant is to write down all of the indicators of tight and loose linkage they can identify.

c. HAVE EACH PARTICIPANT EXCHANGE the list with someone else (specify whom) and discuss the indicators with that person.

d. DISCUSS EACH CASE pointing out indicators and asking for questions if there are any. In discussing the examples, make sure the participants are calling everything an indicator.

(1) Indicators: sharing how present classes are going; eating lunch together to discuss classes; touch base on problems.
Red herrings: Both teach first grade; share old stories.

(2) Indicators: actively discuss courses; jointly plan; have to acquire consent of others for curriculum changes; implies curriculum guide governs behavior.
Red herrings: respects other's work; monthly meetings.

(3) Indicators: rarely talk about classes; course overlap; few prerequisites; occasionally compare notes.
Red herrings: respects other's work; monthly meetings.

Step 7 Conduct the "Handling Situations" case study activity as follows.

a. DISTRIBUTE THE SUBUNIT EXAMPLES handout with the four cases and explain that the participants should identify the kind of linkage in each case and brainstorm strategies for promoting widespread change in each case.

b. DECIDE IF YOU WANT TO WORK in small groups or a large group and arrange the participants accordingly.

c. GET PARTICIPANTS TO WORK with the cases, then stop them and have discussion of which type of subunit each case exemplifies. Also discuss with participants what approach they would use to promote change in each case and why. The answers for the examples are:

Example 1: Professional Team
Example 2: Administrator's Delight
Example 3: Social Club
Example 4: Egg Crate

Step 8 Conduct the Creating the Best Linkage System skill development activity as follows.

a. DIVIDE PARTICIPANTS INTO GROUPS of 4-6 individuals. Group them homogeneously, if possible, by school level or community served. Explain that this activity focuses on their own experiences and behavior working with change and innovation.

b. DISTRIBUTE "SCHOOL DESCRIPTION" SHEETS. Explain that each group member is to fill out the sheet individually. Then the groups are to compare individual sheets, discuss the schools described, and devise ways to increase the potential for yielding widespread change. That is, they should assess the linkages in the school, decide where to concentrate attention, propose how to work with tightly-linked departments or grade levels, and determine what kind of temporary linkages are necessary as a group. The questions on the presentation handouts may help them think more about the school and the kind of assistance needed to improve it. Tell them that they will be asked to report on their progress at the end of the activity.

c. FACILITATE GROUP PROCESSES where appropriate (e.g., keep group members on task, clarify concepts, help adjudicate differences). Group members should select a recorder and--if they think it would help the process--a group leader. Keep reminding them of the time.

d. STOP THE ACTIVITY AND BEGIN ANALYSIS of the group deliberations by their outcomes. Participants should also be encouraged to comment on the ease or difficulty of working through the activity and the problems they encountered in accomplishing their tasks.

Implementation:
Presentation Outline

A. Schools as organizations

B. Linkages (distribute HANDOUT on Assessing Linkages)

   1. Common definition
   2. Effects on implementation
   3. Indicators of linkages

C. Two important findings of research on school organization

   1. Schools are more loosely than tightly structured
   2. Schools vary as to linkages across levels and within subunits

D. Temporary linkages (distribute HANDOUT on Creating Temporary Linkages)

   1. Field agent can create temporary linkages
      a. Define temporary system
      b. Examples of temporary systems, including those in project
      c. Compare different types of systems on structural characteristics
      d. Predictions about effects of each

E. Matching strategy to type of linkage (distribute HANDOUT on Matching Strategies and Linkage)

   1. Four types of subunits

Implementation: Presentation Narrative

Most projects take too long getting to the action, even though implementation is the reason the project was started in the first place. So far we've made the same mistake. We have spent half of the training sessions on the initiation phase. This session will begin to correct that. We will now focus on one of the two most critical issues that confront a field agent: How do you spread change beyond the core planning team?

Schools as Organizations

As we begin to address this issue, we need to think about what schools look like organizationally. That is, who influences whom, who has authority to do what, who talks to whom, who knows what anybody else is doing, and so forth. In short, we are interested in the three R's of school organization: rules, roles, and relationships.

Most of us tend to think of schools as being uniform. We say, for example, schools are boring, schools are factories, or schools are loosely structured. We usually recognize that such generalizations mask differences of quality and success--and even of organization--among schools. But as field agents we need to think of differences within schools, as well, if we are to assist them effectively. Let us look for a moment at organizational differences within schools.

Think of the organization where you work. Are there cliques? Do all people get treated in the same way by superiors or subordinates? Does everyone know how everyone else does their jobs? Does everyone talk to everyone else? If you answered, in order, Yes, No, No, and No, then there are organizational differences where you work. In most cases, there is a hodge-podge of organizational forms where people work. Schools are the same and the differences that come from this hodge-podge can make a substantial difference in how successful implementation is in a school.

School Linkages

Our research points to linkage as the one organizational characteristic as the one that most affects the spread of change. When we talk about organizational linkage we mean the degree to which parts of the organization function interdependently. School linkages can vary from loose to tight. In schools with loose links there is considerable autonomy. Staff do what they want to do with little or no coordination among themselves or with administrators. In a loosely-linked school, teachers may respond to an administrator's directives much differently from each other and from the way the administrator intended. They may not respond at all.

Tight linkage, on the other hand, describes a situation where there is a great deal of coordination among staff, administrators, and rules and procedures. In a school with closer linkages, when one staff member acts, others have to respond; and they typically respond in a fairly uniform and predictable way. We should point out before going on that many schools have both tight *and* loose linkages. Some schools shift between the two.

Linkages can have strong effects on change activities. For example, teachers who rarely have to coordinate their actions with others (a situation of loose linkage) can easily initiate instructional changes, whereas teachers who must clear changes through appropriate channels (tight linkage) have considerably less freedom to be innovative. On the other hand, should someone in a loosely-linked school decide that an innovation ought to be implemented throughout the faculty, they may have trouble getting it done; the mechanisms to communicate, induce, and maintain new behavior in others in the school may very well be missing.

This issue is especially salient for technical assistance agents because the research overwhelmingly suggests that schools tend to have loose, rather than tight, linkages. In other words, the organization of most schools is apt to frustrate the spread of new practices, rather than make it easy, unless special steps are taken.

The first step is to understand what linkages look like; that is, to recognize characteristics that indicate the extent of a school's linkages. A number of these indicators are listed on the handout entitled "Assessing Linkages."

Our findings on linkages provide two important lessons for technical assistance. Lesson one is that the more linkages there are, the more the innovative practice will spread. If there are few existing linkages in a school, the agent can try to establish them. That is, create a temporary linkage system, such as a planning committee, as a vehicle for school improvement. Thus, without having to revamp an entire school from the start or having to reject it as a client, the agent can establish a beachhead for implementation.

Lesson two is: Identify where linkages occur and use them to move implementation beyond the initial planning committee. For example, try to include on your planning committee representatives from departments where instruction is often discussed. Or, if teachers adhere to the curriculum closely, try to include on the planning committee individuals with authority to alter the curriculum. In essence, the agent should first find out where linkages are and then use them to advantage. Of course, it is easy to give advice; more difficult to use it. So, let's examine these two suggestions more closely.

Unless measures are taken to strengthen the bonds that tie most school personnel together, the prospects for comprehensive change are dim indeed. In lieu of undertaking a massive organizational restructuring before beginning to improve a school's instructional program, an agent can help establish a temporary linkage system for implementing change. Such a temporary system consists of a group of individuals who engage in a joint task for a limited period of time. Typically, a small subset of organizational members comprise such groups. As they carry out frequent discussions and joint tasks, this group gradually shows signs of becoming tightly-linked, which, at least among themselves, should lead to successful implementation of new practices.

To be sure, temporary systems do not automatically develop closer links than permanent systems. There can be considerable variation. For example, the kinds of interpersonal interaction typically found in in-service workshops is similar to that generally found in loosely-linked schools. These settings rarely provide opportunity for much discussion among participants. Individuals are usually free to act or not to act on information, and feelings are mixed about the importance of the activity. Because of these features, such workshops make no tough demands on school staff and, thus, are relatively easy to arrange. They are also easy to ignore and seldom lead to widespread change.

On the other hand, a temporary system made up of a series of workshops on one issue is likely to generate tighter linkages among participants because this format allows teachers to consider ideas more thoroughly as a group and grants them increased time for discussions. This system may also have the added value of heightening the importance of the workshops in the eyes of participants, although, in the end (as with any workshop), participants remain free to either use or not use the new knowledge.

The RBS projects used frequently-convened planning groups as temporary systems for implementing change. As indicated, not only did these groups meet regularly for half a year or longer, and provide numerous opportunities for discussion, but they also entailed joint responsibility for decision-making. And they worked pretty well in most cases.

Temporary systems for school improvement can be compared along at least three dimensions: duration, extent of discussion opportunities, and degree of joint decision-making responsibility. The handout on "Creating Temporary Linkages" compares the three types of temporary systems discussed above along with some guesses about the nature of linkages and the quantity of implementation likely to result in each system.

As the chart shows, systems of short duration, with few chances for discussion and no shared responsibility for acting on information, will probably develop few linkages among members. Systems with characteristics further along the three dimensions will tend to exhibit closer linkages. Furthermore, given the relationship between linkage and implementation, it is possible to use systems of linkage to predict the spread of change throughout the temporary system. Again looking at the chart, we see that systems resembling one-day workshops will foster few individual changes;

whereas workshop series will lead to more individual changes. And these changes will be implemented by most members of planning teams.

The planning teams and workshop groups in the RBS projects fell close to the tightly-linked end of the continuum. For this reason, one would expect that most project participants would have altered their behavior to be in line with project goals. This turns out to be the case. In 12 of the 14 schools, most (if not all) participants changed their classroom behavior, at least initially.

The significance of this for field agents is that they must alter their approaches to implementing change as they move from level to level among schools and from subunit to subunit within schools. To do this well, an agent must spend time sensing where linkages exist and then try to take advantage of them.

We next highlight two kinds of linkage: horizontal linkage among teachers and vertical linkage among administrators, procedures, and teachers. Naturally, both kinds of linkage can be present to greater or lesser degrees in any school.

The last handout shows four types of linkage and indicates strategies which take into account these four possible linkage mixes. In Social Clubs, teachers routinely talk about instructional activities, plan together, and jointly evaluate the activities. A Social Club has value for spreading change. It is almost assured in the Social Club that information about projects and new practices that one teacher possesses will be shared at some point with other Social Club members. For the most part, however, a Social Club's value is limited because teacher-to-teacher communication beyond the Club is not so rapid and efficient as it is within the Club.

Thus, using a core committee of Social Club innovators to instigate change naturally throughout an entire faculty will be uneven, at best. Field agents can push the process along by finding out where horizontal linkages occur among Social Clubs and inviting one of the teachers from each Social Club subunit to join a planning team. Involving more than one member of such a subunit may be an inefficient use of planning resources because release time or compensation is being provided to someone who, in all likelihood, would receive the information anyway.

In Professional Teams, teachers also meet and talk with one another about instruction. However, they reach decisions about guidelines for instruction that the entire group is expected to follow. There is a general pattern by which change spreads in these Professional Team subunits. First, an innovative practice takes hold as a promising idea among grade-level or department members, and then it is incorporated into the Professional Team's operating routine. In working with such subunits, the field agent's strategic problem is selling the group, not just an individual, on the idea in the first place. The situation is different from that of the Social Club where the field agent's goal is to recruit one teacher who is in touch with and well-respected by other Social Club teachers and then to let that person spread the new practice throughout the group. In the Professional Team, not only are members' work activities integrated, but usually they are also bound by established procedures. Individual teachers are not free to implement new practices without the advice and consent of the total subunit. To do so would be to treat cavalierly a set of procedures and guidelines already endorsed by the group.

In Administrator's Delight, most of the bonds are vertical; that is, teachers' actions are bound, or are at least heavily influenced, by administrative behavior or by policies from higher levels of authority. In fact, in our study, vertical linkages were more frequent than horizontal ones. Three kinds of vertical linkages were found to be helpful in promoting implementation of the RBS projects: (1) linkage between performance evaluations and teacher behavior, (2) linkage between curriculum guidelines and teacher behavior, and (3) linkage between state mandates and the behavior of the total school community.

How can the field agent determine which one to use and where? The first step is to check a school's evaluation system. If evaluation is frequent and most teachers say it is important, then encourage the evaluation procedures to be modified to complement the innovation.

Second, if such vertical linkage does not exist or there is a strong philosophical bias against what could be termed a "top-down" or "heavy-handed" approach, the field agent would be wise to assess the relationship between the formal curriculum and teacher behavior. Where the curriculum does seem to be strongly influencing instructional behavior, including key curriculum decision makers in planning discussions could expedite implementation immensely. They can incorporate planning decisions into the curriculum, thereby influencing teacher behavior.

Third, the field agent should do a little information-gathering around state education agencies (SEAs) to find out what is coming down the pike. There may be a logical tie-in between a change project and either funding opportunities or upcoming state requirements that can provide a boost to implementation. Henry Brickell, a well-known observer of educational change processes, argues in Educational Leadership (1980, 34, 3: 202) that the most effective school improvement weapon is "a stinging mandate followed by a powerful technical assist."

It is conceivable and probable that a field agent may encounter a school where most subunits have no significant linkages of any kind. Indeed, most schools resemble egg-crates. That is, teachers are in close proximity to one another but their work activities rarely touch. Widespread implementation in such cases is more difficult to attain but "good enough" success can be promoted by establishing a temporary system having tighter linkages than exist in the egg crates.

One strategy here is to expand membership in an already existing temporary system gradually until every teacher is included. However, there are problems with this process. Primary among these is the need to recapitulate and, occasionally, renegotiate decisions already made. Such backtracking helps build commitment among new members, but causes frustration among the original ones and increases the time span of the project. These trade-offs reduce the prospects of complete success.

A slightly different tack is to create opportunities for linkages to develop by reworking class schedules so that all the teachers in each subunit have a common planning period with a representative of the planning team. These representatives, in turn, can become the "field agents" for the rest of the teachers. However, teachers are not in the habit of using their planning periods in this way. And there is a risk that when administrators begin to take a less proactive part in seeing to it that regular meetings are held, the frequency of the meetings will drop considerably.

Extending the temporary system, then, is a potentially effective strategy where egg crate subunits predominate, but with some caveats. Enlarging the original system seems to become cumbersome rather quickly. Creating several new systems with original planning team members as leaders appears more viable. The success of this second method, though, requires careful attention to scheduling and sufficient administrative involvement to keep the system intact long enough to let it exhibit the necessary system linkages for widespread implementation to result.

Suggested Reading

Corbett, H. D. (1982). To make an omelette you have to break the egg crate. *Educational Leadership*, *40*(2), 34-35.

Corbett, H. D., Dawson, J. A., and Firestone, W. A. (1984). *School context and school change: Implications for effective planning*. New York: Teachers College Press (Chapters I, II, VI, and VIII).

Weick, K. G. (1982). Administering education in loosely coupled schools. *Phi Delta Kappan*, *63*(10), 673-676.

Session IV. Spreading Change

Masters for Handouts

Tale of Two Teams 111
Assessing Linkages in a School 113
Creating Temporary Linkages 115
Matching Strategies and Linkage 117
Tight and Loose Linkages 119
Subunit Examples 121
School Description Sheet 123

Case Studies

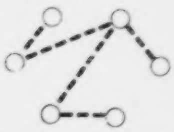
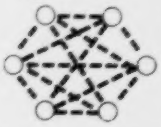
Story One. Tammy was a participant in a project designed to improve some of the ways she used time in the classroom. When the project had been announced, she eagerly volunteered, as she had done for several other worthwhile-sounding projects in her five years of teaching. The project was as good as she had hoped, and she enthusiastically made several changes in her classroom. She wanted to share what she had learned with the other teachers on her multi-grade level team, but was frustrated by the lack of sharing and infrequent informal conversations that typified the team. In fact, the teachers eschewed a common work area available to them, using their individual classrooms to house their professional materials and to do most of their paperwork. Two years after the project had formally ended, Tammy continued to use what she had learned; not one of her teammates had ever tried anything related to the project.

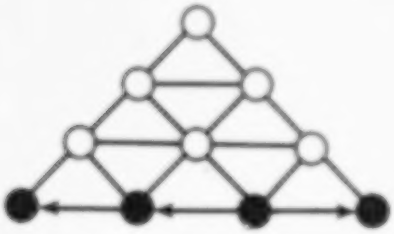
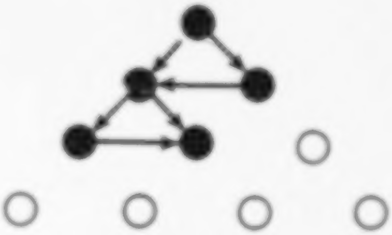
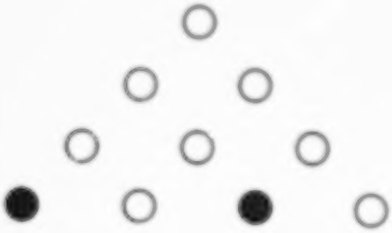
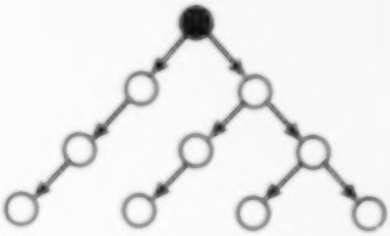
Story Two. Frank taught in the same school, was a member of a different multi-grade level team, had just as eagerly volunteered for the project, and similarly altered his instructional practices enthusiastically. He felt so strongly about the usefulness of the changes that he discussed them at length with the other members of his team in their regular planning meetings and the frequent informal conversations they held as they graded papers in the common work area available to them. Over time, the team systematically agreed upon specific changes they all would make and then jointly assessed the success of the new practices. Eventually, they designed their own tests so that they would be using a common measure with which to evaluate. Two years after the project ended, the changes were still being used a new teacher to the team had quickly adopted the same practices.

Assessing Linkages
in a School

	Indicators of Linkages What research suggests you should look for	
Document	Content	Source
School Context and School Change	Amount Discussion in Department Meetings Teachers Visiting Each Other's Classrooms Goal Consensus Among Staff Lesson Plans Regularly Inspected Curriculum Followed Closely or Not Teacher Influence Over Decisions Prerequisites for Courses	Corbett, H.D., Dawson, J.A., Firestone, W.A. *School Context and School Change.* New York: Teachers College Press, 1984.
Stability and Change	Administrative Influence Over Decisions Standard Curriculum, Tests, Lesson Plans Peer Supportiveness Frequency of Disputes Common Beliefs About Effective Teaching	Rosenblum, S., and Louis, K.S. *Stability and Change.* New York: Plenum, 1981.
Patterns of Organizational Control and Teacher Militance	Existence of Rules Enforcement of Rules Student, Parent, and Peer Pressures Criteria for Dismissal and Promotion Degree of Teacher Autonomy	Corwin, R.G. Patterns of Organizational Control and Teacher Militance: Theoretical Continuities on the Idea of "Loose Coupling." In *Research in Sociology of Education of Socialization, Volume 2.* Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, 1981, pp. 261-291.
In Search of Excellence	Shared Values Quick Feedback in Hiring and Evaluation Regular, Informal Communication	Peters, T.J., and Waterman, R.H. *In Search of Excellence.* New York: Harper & Row, 1982.
Educational Organizations as Loosely-Coupled Systems	Amount of Slack Time Several Means Producing Same End Amount of Regulation Frequency of Teacher Observations Capability to Supervise Teaching Performance	Weick, K. Educational Organizations as Loosely-Coupled Systems. *Administrative Science Quarterly,* 1976, *21,* 1-19.

Creating Temporary Linkage Systems

	System Type		
System Characteristics	Inservice Session	Workshop Series	Planning Committee
Duration ■	Short ■	Medium or Long ■ ■ ■	Long ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
Meeting Frequency ●	One or Two ●	Several ● ● ●	Many ● ● ● ● ● ●
Discussion Opportunities ▲	Few or None ▲	Occasional ▲ ▲ ▲	Frequent ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲
Decision Making ▽	Individual ▽	Individual ▽	Frequent ▽ ▽ ▽ ▽ ▽
System Linkages ○-○	None 	Loose 	Tight 
Likely Change Outcomes ◆	Innovation by a few ◆	Innovation by a few more ◆ ◆ ◆	Innovation by even more ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆

	Linkage Among Teachers	*Linkage Among Administrators, Procedures and Teachers*
high	Natural Diffusion: Selling Key Individual on the Innovation Social Club (1) 	Natural Diffusion: Selling a Subunit on the Innovation Professional Team (2) 
low	Extending Temporary Systems Egg Crate (4) 	Changing Policy and Procedures Administrator's Delight (3) 

Three Case Studies

(1) Helen and Alice are first grade teachers in the same elementary school. Helen taught Alice when she was a child, and the two enjoy sharing stories of those days as well as how their present classes are going. As a result they usually eat lunch together to discuss their classes and touch base on problems at the end of the day.

(2) The social studies department in the high school has regular monthly meetings, on the third Thursday of each month. In these meetings they usually discuss how particular courses are going and jointly plan alterations. Once Roy wanted to try a new activity in his class with the encouragement of a curriculum coordinator but declined to do so until he received the consent of the entire department to change the curriculum guide. Despite their frequent planning, several group members openly admit they dislike each other.

(3) Martha is a high school math teacher. She respects the work of most other members of her department, but rarely talks with them about their classes in their monthly meetings. No one teaches the same course, and no course is a prerequisite for taking another with one exception: the department chairman's advanced trigonometry students must first take Martha's Algebra II course. As a result, Martha and the chairman occasionally compare notes on the patterns of difficulties students seem to exhibit.

Case Studies

Beth and Pete are third grade teachers. In their school, there is a system of minimum competencies which every student must meet before moving on to the next grade. In each classroom, the teacher keeps a chart containing students' names and the competencies. As a student demonstrates mastery of each skill, the teacher places a check by the student's name. Beth and Pete have found that it helps work through the competencies more effectively if they jointly design tests and brainstorm activities. In fact, both found that all students had completed the competencies by mid-March and were able to spend a lot of time on enrichment activities.

Glenn has taught in the English department of the junior high school for eight years. All of the other teachers in the department have been there for at least five years. Glenn reports that they respect and get along with each other, but they rarely, if ever, have time to talk together about school. Each belongs on several different committees; and because English is a top priority for the school, the teachers are kept busy getting through the curriculum designed for their particular grade. Glenn occasionally comments that he can't find time to try some of the interesting activities he has heard about at workshops.

Jane, Dorothy, and Lucy all teach in the business department of a rural high school. Although each is free to design her own courses, and none of the courses they teach overlap, they frequently tell each other about activities they are using and exchange suggestions for handling problems in their classrooms. They occasionally will jointly try new ideas. As department chairperson, Jane often wonders if she should be more directive in getting the others to initiate new practices, but she feels that is something the principal should do. The principal, on the other hand, believes teachers wish to be left alone and acts accordingly.

Will, Mark, and Harriet all teach in the science department of a large high school. At a recent summer in-service, they discussed why they seemed to see each other just once or twice a year. To begin with, Will and Mark teach during the first part of the split schedule in operation at the school. They are there from 7 to 2. Harriet teaches during the second half of the day and arrives at school at 10:00, leaving at 5:00. The curriculum coordinator once tried to schedule a meeting of the 12 teachers in the department to discuss establishing a formal science curriculum, but gave up when it became apparent that three meetings would be needed to contact all 12 of them.

School Description Sheet

Community Served:

Positions of Key Project Participants:

Implementation Goals of Improvement Project (i.e., what are people expected to do and how many are supposed to do it):

How closely do curriculum guides govern teacher classroom activities?

How often to departments or grade levels meet to discuss instruction?

Do teachers visit each others' classrooms?

What slack time do teachers have during the day, if any?

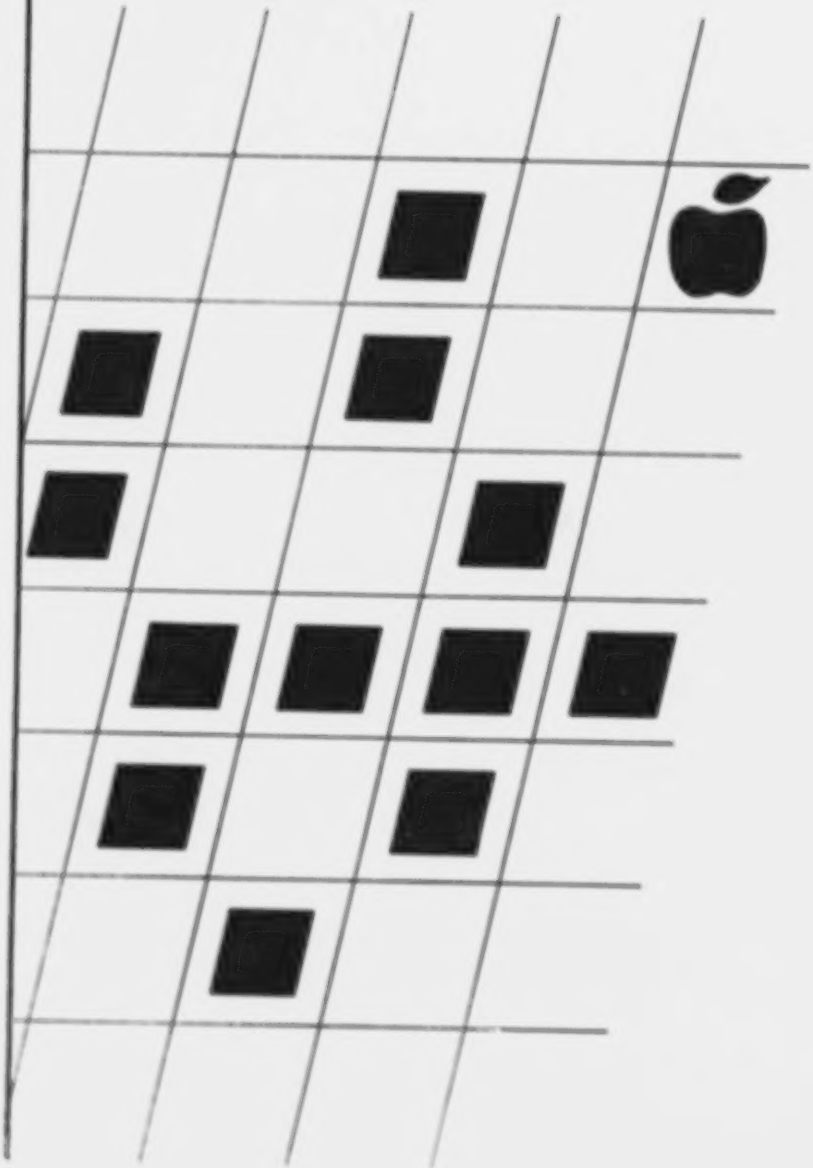
How often does the principal discuss instruction with teachers?

How often does the principal interact with teachers on any matter?

How often are teachers' classrooms supervised?

By whom?

CONTEXT &
CHANGE



V.

Session V: Promoting Lasting Change

Contents

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Trainer's Overview

GOALS:

1. To identify critical post-implementation events necessary for newly implemented changes to continue and school context factors that affect the occurrence of these events.
2. To help field agents develop a plan to assist a school in permanently adopting a change.

MATERIALS:

1. "Critical Events for Lasting Change" presentation outline and narrative
2. "Key Organizational Events" handout for Critical Events for Lasting Change presentation
3. "Critical Continuation Events and Influential School Context Factors" handout for Critical Events for Lasting Change presentation
4. Case Studies -- #1, Crushed Hopes Elementary, #2, Snatching-Defeat-from-the-Jaws-of-Victory Junior High, #3, Ontherun High School -- for Critical Events activity
5. "From Novelty to Lasting Change" worksheet for Planning for Permanent Adoption activity

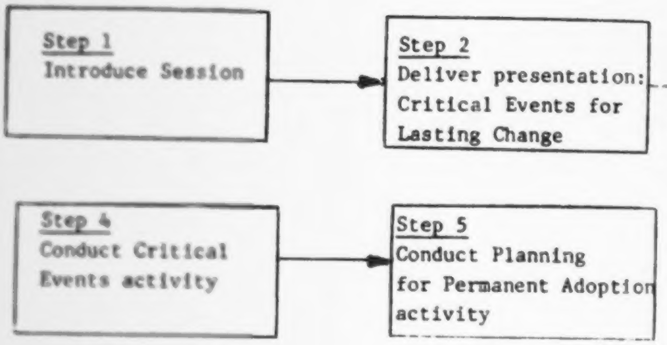
PHYSICAL SETTING:

- Theater or classroom style with provision for small group work or groups of 6-8 with a focal point for the presentation.

TRAINING SEQUENCE AND TIME REQUIRED:

1. Critical Events for Lasting Change presentation ...
   45 - 60 minutes
2. Critical Events Case Study activity and discussion ...
   45 - 60 minutes
3. Planning for Permanent Adoption skill development activity and discussion ...
   30 - 45 minutes

TRAINING STEPS:


Step 1
Introduce Session
Step 2
Deliver presentation: Critical Events for Lasting Change
Step 3
Answer questions, clarify concepts
Step 4
Conduct Critical Events activity
Step 5
Conduct Planning for Permanent Adoption activity

STEP SUGGESTIONS:

Step 1 Introduce the session by outlining the upcoming activities. Note that the session will focus on moving an innovation from implementation (where the innovation is being used by most of the staff) to continuation (where the innovation is part of the routine).

Step 2 Deliver the presentation "Critical Events for Lasting Change," using either the outline or narrative. Emphasize the following points:

- the importance to continuation of certain types of post-implementation events (incentives, changes in rules or procedures, and assessments of effectiveness)
- context will make the occurrence of these events more or less likely
- there are ways to encourage the occurrence of the events.

Use the handouts as appropriate during the presentation.

Step 3 Answer questions and clarify concepts about critical events for lasting change.

Step 4 Conduct the "Critical Events" case study activity as follows.

a. DIVIDE PARTICIPANTS into groups of 6-8 individuals. The case studies are geared to levels so it may be useful to match them to the levels usually worked by the participants.

b. DISTRIBUTE CASE STUDIES and explain that participants are to read the case study material and--as a group--discuss the case to determine:

- the critical events that could have been exploited by the field agent to help move the innovation from a temporary to a permanent state
- the factors of context that could have been exploited by the field agent to help the critical events to occur, thereby helping to move the innovations from a temporary to a permanent state
- what the field agent did or did not do to capitalize on these events and contextual factors
- how the field agent might have adjusted his or her behavior to take advantage of these events.

Tell participants that the epilogue is intended to provide more information about salient contextual features.

c. BEGIN THE ACTIVITY facilitating group processes (e.g., keeping group members on task, clarifying concepts, providing information, helping adjudicate differences). As they begin listing critical events and contextual factors in order to suggest changes in field agent behavior, group members should select a recorder. Also, if they think it will help the process, they should select a group leader. Keep reminding them of the time.

d. STOP THE ACTIVITY and have the participants report on their progress. This report should include a brief description of the case study, the critical events that the group agreed on, and their recommended changes in field agent behavior, if any.

e. ENCOURAGE DISCUSSION about how their own technical assistance behavior in their situation might be influenced by this information abut critical events. Perhaps give participants a short break.

5. Conduct the Planning for Permanent Adoption skill activity as follows.

a. DIVIDE PARTICIPANTS INTO THE SAME GROUPS of 6-8 individuals that were used in the Critical Events case study. It is important to group participants as homogenously as possible in terms of the kind of situations they are likely to work with.

b. DISTRIBUTE "From Novelty to Lasting Change" worksheet to participants. Explain that they should decide on a set of crucial events or factors that have the most potential for facilitating permanent adoption of an innovation using a situation they are or have been experiencing. They should then--as a group--develop a strategy for exploiting those factors and events in each person's situation. Remind them that they should use both their own practical knowledge and the new insights they have gained as a result of the session to accomplish their task. Tell them they will be asked to report on their task and progress at the end of the activity.

c. BEGIN THE ACTIVITY facilitating group processes (e.g., keeping group members on task, clarifying concepts, providing information, adjudicating differences). As they begin to develop their list of crucial factors and events and their plans for exploiting them, group members should select a recorder. They also may want to select a group leader if they think it will help the process. Keep reminding them of the time.

d. STOP THE ACTIVITY and have the groups report on their progress. They should include a description of their school, their list of crucial factors and events, and their strategies. They should be encouraged to comment on how realistic the ease or difficulty of their task, and problems they will encounter in accomplishing it. Also ask them how they augmented their practical knowledge with new information from the session.

Critical Events for Lasting Change: Presentation Outline

A. The durability of change (distribute HANDOUT on Key Organizational Events)

  1. Definition of continuation
    a. As a stage of the change process
    b. As a temporary system

B. Three categories of post-implementation events

  1. Incentives in temporary and permanent systems
    a. Administrators as source
    b. Teachers as source
    c. Students as source
  2. Changing rules and procedures
  3. Assessments of effectiveness

C. School context and post-implementation events (distribute HANDOUT on Context and Critical Continuation Events)

  1. Where the events will not take place
  2. What field agents can do to promote lasting change
    a. Timing of withdrawal
    b. Extending temporary system
    c. Assessing likelihood of administrative incentives being provided
    d. Assessing where curriculum changes will be effective

Critical Events for Lasting Change: Presentation Narrative

"In education, we seem to be great at getting things started, but we don't seem to finish them very well." This sentiment was the one most often expressed by people interviewed in the RBS study. The cynical overtone suggested that teachers who didn't want to change had merely to wait and the innovation would go away or be replaced.

So how can we make change last? In our study we found that at least one of three categories of events had to take place: (1) provision of incentives; (2) incorporation of changes into rules and procedures; or (3) evaluations. Or in a simpler vein, whatever doesn't get attention won't happen.

The Continuation Phase

As we said before, the change process can be divided conceptually into three stages: initiation, implementation, and continuation. This last stage has been given different labels. Some researchers call it "incorporation," some "routinization," and others refer to it as "continuation." Since the last term connotes the idea that change can endure as the result of either intentional efforts or simple inertia, we prefer to use continuation.

Perhaps the indicator which best separates implementation activities from continuation activities is at that point when external resources--special ones allocated specifically to the change effort--are removed. This can be compared to removing a patient from life support to determine whether critical functions can be maintained independent of special assistance.

There is still another way to view this juncture in the life of a change project. Implementation becomes continuation when temporary systems are disbanded. If you will recall, when special projects involve subsets of organizational members, the subsets can be labeled "temporary systems." In these cases, project participants (1) are called together for a special purpose; (2) are expected to disband when either their objectives have been attained, their allotted time is up, or their meeting is over; and (3) through the pursuit of a joint task, take on the characteristics of group life. The disbanding of such a temporary system to promote change, then, can be thought of as an indicator of a shift in organizational concern from getting new practices started to seeing that they are continued as a routine operation.

Insuring Continuation: Providing Incentives

Incentives are any source of gratification or discouragement. If someone is rewarded for engaging in a new practice and values the reward, then that is a positive incentive. If someone suffers a distasteful consequence for not engaging in the new behavior, then that is a negative incentive. Or put another way, the former is the carrot and the latter is the stick. But remember one person's carrot may be another person's stick. Thus, if a reward makes a person feel punished for having engaged in the new practice, then that reward is actually a disincentive for change. And whether a reward will be a positive incentive, a negative incentive, or a disincentive is not always clear. You may recall the story of the woman who approached Winston Churchill and said, "Sir, if you were my husband, I'd poison your coffee." To which Churchill replied, "If you were my wife, madam, I'd drink it." Thinking positively, however, we will focus mainly on the carrots; there is too much evidence that relying solely on sticks in organizational life leads to unhealthy, unintended consequences.

The schools we studied were similar to most other schools in terms of limits placed on the kinds of incentives that teachers could be offered. Money, extra planning time, and other concrete benefits were simply not feasible rewards. Nevertheless, some intrinsic incentives were very effective, and the lesson to be learned was that a little goes a long way.

One easily provided and often effective intrinsic incentive was the attention participants got from the administrator. Participating teachers did not expect--or even want--principals to observe their classes more frequently, or to engage them in long conversations about the new practices, but they greatly appreciated the occasional passing remark recognizing their innovative efforts or a sincere inquiry as to how the changes were progressing. Significantly, in schools where such conversations did not occur, teachers noted their absence. As one teacher said, "My brain wasn't jogged; there wasn't someone saying 'Hey, where is that new stuff?'...You needed to get that shot in the arm...otherwise it's easier for me to do what I've always done." Or, as another teacher said in explaining the discontinuation of new practices, "The old adage, 'out of sight, out of mind,' applies."

Some principals used teacher evaluations as an incentive to maintain changes. In one sense this served as a negative incentive, in that using new practices was a means of avoiding a lower evaluation. However, several teachers noted that the failure to use new practices was not likely to meet with very punitive consequences, since it was only one part of the total evaluation. Instead, this special evaluative attention to new practices played a symbolic role. It symbolized that the innovations were important to the principal. By using the new practices, a teacher was likely to receive favorable commendation and increase the principal's estimation of the value of his or her performance. Thus the potential that participation in the projects had for improving the principal's opinion of the teacher's efforts was a second important incentive.

So far, our examples have mostly mentioned principals as the incentive providers. Certainly there were others in the schools whose attention to and opinions of the value of a teacher's performance were potentially significant in maintaining new behavior, including other teachers and students. However, in only a few instances did these sources provide incentives for innovative behavior often enough to be effective. And there are reasons for this.

In the 14 schools--and research indicates that this is typical of other schools as well--there was little interaction among the teachers about specific instructional practices. For the most part, teachers taught in individual classrooms away from the eyes of other adults. They had little knowledge about what other teachers did unless noise penetrating adjacent walls yielded clues, and consequently they had few opportunities to form opinions about particular practices of others. Or more importantly, they had few chances to express reactions to others' practices. There were a few exceptions within schools where teachers worked more closely together as grade level or department teams. And in these rare grades or departments, information and encouragement flowed freely, reducing the reliance of these teachers on administrators to provide incentives for their participation. Nevertheless, no school we studied had more than two or three subunits of this type. Consequently, where the principal did not serve as a compensatory source of incentives, the maintenance of new practices was sporadic, at best.

Primarily because of teacher isolation, students have been shown to be particularly important sources of incentives for teachers. However, only three or four teachers in the schools we studied reported that students had been especially effusive about specific new practices. Instead, students seemed to respond more to general aspects of a teacher's style than to day-to-day activities that the teacher provided.

Summing up for the moment, we feel safe saying that continued incentives for innovative behavior are necessary if classroom changes are to be maintained long enough for the new practices to become routine. We also feel safe saying that, given the typical organization of schools, principals are the major source of such incentives. And that two particularly effective and easily provided incentives are attention and expression of the high value that a principal places on a teacher's performance.

Despite these apparently simple and cost-free ways by which innovative behavior can be maintained, admonitions to principals to go and do likewise are not likely to be especially effective, if other findings of this study are taken into account. Principal behavior is embedded in the social context of the school system. As a result, it is influenced not only by the predilections of individuals but also by organizational relationships.

Thus, the question of how to bring about effective administrative behavior cannot be separated from how to bring about effective system behavior.

This need to consider the system as well as the people in it suggests several implications for maintaining change. First, if a principal is not particularly disposed to interaction with teachers about instruction--or if he or she favors such interaction but cannot find the time for it--he or she is not likely to make a special effort to provide incentives for teachers to continue changes. To stimulate such action, system incentives must be available to the principal. These usually come from district administrators. For district administrators to readily allocate the necessary resources to support particular administrative behaviors, however, project-related changes must be seen as ways to attain district goals or to meet state mandates. Only rarely will a project succeed over time without a tie-in to those priorities.

Second, formal project activities (e.g., meetings to discuss progress) can by system-generated incentives as they provide a means for refocusing attention on the innovative behavior. In fact, knowing that such a meeting is scheduled is often enough to spur teachers and principals to maintain or support some changes in order to have something to discuss. Scheduling several such meetings after the major portion of a project has ended provides a built-in source of incentives. This extension of special events related to a project reduces reliance on the heroic efforts of an individual who tries to promote the continuation of change.

Third, principals are the most likely source of incentives but not the only source. By creating more opportunities for joint planning and shared classroom responsibilities among teachers, an administrator can create a system to help make teachers a greater potential source of incentives for one another. Doing this will reduce some of the administrative burden of maintaining change and considerably improve the chances that new practices will endure.

Insuring Continuation: Incorporating Changes into Rules and Procedures

This category might seem more related to the use of sticks than carrots, but that is not necessarily the case, and incorporating changes into rules or procedures can play an important part in maintaining changes. First, formal teacher evaluations constitute a set of procedures where a tie-in to program changes can likely be made. We mentioned these earlier in our discussion of incentives. And based on our experience in the RBS schools, such incorporation is not viewed punitively. Instead, teachers took this as a signal of what the principal considered to be important. Principals who used this strategy did not always alter their formal evaluation form (in some cases that was not their decision to make anyway), but they did make note in the evaluations of signs of teachers using the new practices. And they prominently mentioned these in post-evaluation conferences.

A second set of procedures that likely can be altered are the those in the curriculum guide. However, we'll put out a tremendous caveat here: Curriculum guides do not always govern behavior. (Shock! Dismay! Amazement!) We all know that the real curriculum is what teachers actually do, and this may or may not overlap with what is written. But where the overlap is considerable, incorporating new practices into the curriculum guides not only encourages current staff to continue using them, but also ensures that new staff will at least hear about them. This is important, because participants in a change project eventually will leave the school for one reason or another. The new practices will leave with them unless some mechanism exists to introduce their replacements to what seem to be advisable activities. Altering curriculum guides can assist this transition.

The above relates mostly to encouraging changes in teaching practices. If changes relate more to discipline or classroom management practices, other procedures may be more relevant targets for alteration. But the premise is the same: If there are rules or procedures that govern action, they can be invaluable supportive devices for enabling changes to last.

Insuring Continuation: Conducting Evaluations

Ideally, evaluation results should be the only factors that determine whether changes last. Realistically, they rarely do so--either because they are not conducted or the changes don't last long enough for them to be conducted. Both of these reasons explain why this event was not prominent in our study, but other research and common sense says they can be.

Nothing succeeds like success. We know that students who succeed in an activity are more likely to continue their efforts than students who repeatedly fail or get no feedback. At some point, even providing incentives and altering procedures will pale beside the need to know if a new practice works. Typically, individuals make this determination on an informal basis. But the evaluation of effectiveness we are talking about is more comprehensive; it's one that should be achieved at the organization level. The organization has to have a way of publicly acknowledging the success of changes. The criterion may be achievement, student or teacher behavior, or just general happiness. Whichever "measure" of success is used, changes will last longer if people feel they are better off than they were before the changes were made.

An additional benefit of doing some kind of evaluation is that it keeps attention focused on the changes a little longer, giving them more time to take hold school-wide.

Will Any of This Work?

Having said all of the above, we can tell you ahead of time where it will work. First, it will work where principals receive encouragement and reinforcement for encouraging and reinforcing teachers. Principals are people, too--busy people. If someone from the central office gives incentives to promote new practices, it will be the rare building administrator who does not maintain the new practice as a priority. Second, it will work well if at least some teachers talk to one another about instruction. With peer encouragement operating, the principal will not have to fight an uphill battle continually. Third, if evaluations and curriculum guides affect behavior, then changing them will, as well. Plain and simple. Finally, if the school is buffered well from distractions like staff turnover, extraneous evaluations, or competing initiatives, it will not be as difficult for staff to attend purposefully and continually to any activity. This requires some cooperation with the central office and, once again, a concerted effort by the principal.

Happily, a field agent can do four things to promote these conditions in the short term.

- Maintain at least a low level of involvement beyond implementation.

Field agents may want to rethink the appropriate time to withdraw from a site. Since the field agent is typically the only person whose responsibilities specifically concern facilitating change, the field agent should be ready to assist the school beyond implementation. This assures that there is at least one person at a site to pat staff on the back.

- Keep the temporary system in place until formal assessments can be conducted.

A field agent cannot assume that schools themselves will evaluate new practices. In fact, most likely they will not unless incentives to promote new practices are available in the interim between implementation and evaluation. Without incentives, the new practices to be assessed probably will have disappeared. To combat this, a field agent could persuade the school to use the temporary system as an incentive and keep it in operation at least until assessments can occur. Not only will this allow more time to plan appropriate assessments, but also meetings themselves can become a vehicle for providing incentives and demonstrating that the project remains a school priority.

- Tailor the field agent role to complement that of administrators.

By now it should be clear that administrators are valuable sources of incentives for teachers implementing new practices. But it should also be clear that administrators provide the kind of incentives that promote continuation only when they already have a history of regularly discussing instruction with teachers or if they themselves receive incentives to do so. Field agents should assess both of these conditions early, to get a fix on how supportive an administrator is likely to be when formal project activities end. Depending on the results, the field agent can plan to stay on site longer, work hard to get the central office and/or community groups to back the change, or just feel comfortable and happy that new practices will continue to be supported after the agent leaves.

- Try to get changes embodied in operating policy.

Just as altering curricula can spread new practices throughout a faculty, they can also help maintain those practices. Of course, such changes are not unilaterally effective; they are useful only where bonds between policy and practice already exist. If schools in general resemble the 14 schools in this study, there are going to be some close linkages of this type in most of them. In these situations, then, reliance on the heroic efforts of an individual to champion change can be reduced by instituting policies that foster new practices.

Suggested Reading

Corbett, H. D. (1982). Principals' contributions to maintaining change. Phi Delta Kappan, 64(3), 190-192.

Corbett, H. D., Dawson, J. A., and Firestone, W. A. (1984). School context and school change: Implications for effective planning. New York: Teachers College Press (Chapters I, II, VII, and VIII).

Huberman, M., & Miles, M. B. (1984). Innovation up close: How school improvement works. New York: Plenum.

Session V. Promoting Lasting Change

Masters for Handouts

Key Organizational Events 145

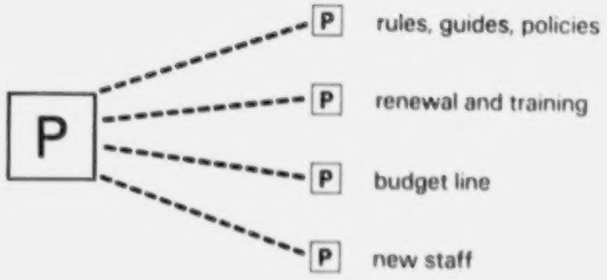
Critical Continuation Events and Influential School Context Factors 147

Critical Events Case Studies 149

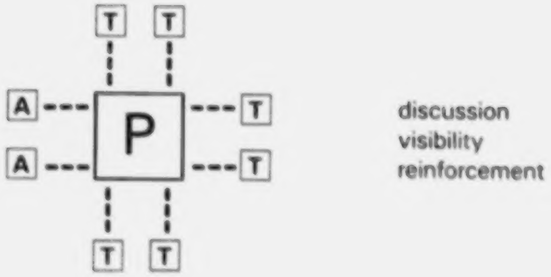
From Novelty to Lasting Change: Worksheet 155

Key Organizational Events

Incorporation


P
P rules, guides, policies
P renewal and training
P budget line
P new staff

Interaction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discussion
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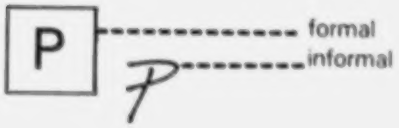
reinforcement

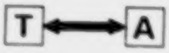
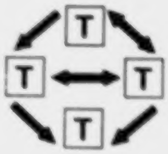
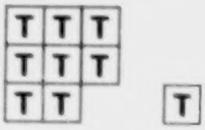
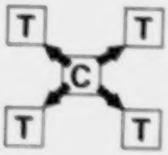
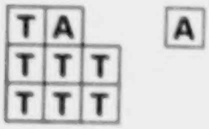
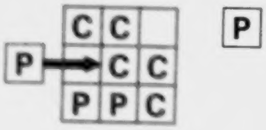
Effectiveness


P
formal
P
informal

A Administrator
P Project
T Teacher

Critical Continuation Events and Influential School Context Factors

T	Teacher
A	Administrator
C	Curriculum
P	Project

Events	Factors	
Provision of administrative incentives for new practices	• Salience of project for district goals • Availability of resources to support change	• Frequency of teacher/administrator interaction 
Provision of peer incentives for new practices	• Subunit linkages 	• Teacher turnover 
Incorporation of new practices into curriculum	• Linkage between curriculum and teachers 	• Mediation of staff turnover
Assessments of effectiveness	• Salience of project for district goals and state priorities • Administrator turnover 	• Adoption rate of new projects 

Case Study 1: Crushed Hopes Elementary

You are despondent. You had done a series of in-services on affective education in a small elementary school in a rural region of the state. At the time, everyone received you well and seemed enthusiastic to try your recommendations. However, a follow-up phone conversation you had with the principal still echoes in your ears.

You: (Enthusiastically) How's everything going?

Principal: (Hesitantly) Well, uh, you see, we have, uh, been fairly busy around here.

You: (Eagerly) I'm sure things are always hopping, but how are the teachers doing with those new ideas from the inservices?

Principal: (Non-commitally) Oh, well, they really liked the inservices a lot. They all thought it was fun and interesting.

You: (Suddenly concerned) Are they having any problems with their classroom activities?

Principal: (Slowly) No, not really....

You: (Relieved) Great.

Principal: (Quickly) Because I don't think they are doing very many of them any more.

You: (Shocked) What?

Principal: (Consolingly) Well, you know they were really excited at first. But I talk to the teachers a lot and they tell me that it has gotten to be just too hard to squeeze anything new into their regular curriculum. This district's pretty adamant about teaching the basics, and the teachers are afraid to move anything aside. It's not your fault.

Despite the principal's consolation, you immediately begin to wonder: what could have been done differently?

Epilogue

It has been several months since your conversation with the principal. As time has passed, you have tried to figure out what went wrong. The answer still escapes you. The school seemed so professional, so easy to assist. The superintendent had supplied all the staff time that was needed. Sure, the principal had moved on to another project near the end of planning, but the superintendent had asked if that was okay. You had said it was "no problem" because the teachers seemed to have a momentum of their own.

And the teachers. For an isolated region, new information certainly was available. In fact, the teachers got together every summer to revise grade level curricula. They established the content to be taught, designed tests to see what students learned, and occasionally reviewed how things were going during the school year. They did not appear to be the kind of teachers who would just drop something. As you think about it, you can still hear a teacher saying: "It's really tight fitting everything we need to teach into the year." But their commitment to the project and their organized approach to teaching should have solved that problem. What is more, the teachers even liked the principal. He is always wandering the halls, chatting with teachers, and dropping in to observe classes.

The more you think about all of this, the more gloomy your attitude becomes. If change cannot be successful in a school like this, where in the world can it succeed?

Case Study 2: Snatching-Defeat-From-The-Jaws-Of-Victory Junior High

This school has been, at once, the most difficult and most rewarding school you have ever worked with. Located in a run-down section of an old manufacturing community, the school has faced every problem imaginable. Declining enrollment, an eroding tax-base, teenage drug dealers, low achievement test scores, and decaying facilities have all confronted the staff. Moreover, staff feel as if 100 well-intended agencies have come to study, assist, or save the school when what really seemed critical was more heat and better nutrition for the students. Nevertheless, your work has been successful. You became involved with the school because the superintendent had decided to concentrate on improving reading scores by incorporating reading activities into all classes, not just the English classes. Resource problems made it necessary to work with just 10 of 40 teachers each year and only in the fall. But this fall, the teachers had slowly become convinced of the project's importance and had made changes.

Now your concern is to keep the 10 teachers going so that there is a base to build upon when 10 more teachers are added next year. You aren't really sure what to do because of the lack of available resources, but you decide at an inservice meeting in the spring you will drop in and discuss this with the principal. She had said she would do anything to help, so maybe some ideas will come out of such a meeting.

Epilogue

As events turned out, you were unable to go by the school during the inservice day. It is now late June, and you have run into the principal at an annual conference on reading sponsored by the local intermediate service agency. Special funding enables as many as three administrators and 10 teachers from each district to attend for free. Because of the topic of the conference, the district generally sends English teachers.

During your conversation, you ask the principal how the other subject area teachers were doing with reading. The principal said she is not sure. By chance, she had conducted evaluations of the teachers in the project during the fall before they had made changes. Thus, she had not been in their classrooms lately. Moreover, administrative layoffs have increased her non-classroom responsibilities, limiting her chances to drop in to visit teachers. She added that she really hadn't heard anyone mention the project, but that reading achievement scores had been received a couple of days ago and that they had improved. As the principal left, she remarked that she would have to try and remember to mention the scores to the teachers.

You grow somewhat worried about your activities at the school in the coming year. What if project teachers have quit paying special attention to reading? Will this affect new project participants? Is it worth going through all the trouble to work at the school if enthusiasm can die out quickly? What can be done to maintain enthusiasm when there are no resources to continue activities all year?

Case Study 3: Ontherun High School

Ontherun is a dynamic high school. It serves a well-educated community and has considerable technical resources available at a nearby university. The staff is professional, continually experimenting with new classroom procedures and activities. The local teacher center provides a steady stream of inservice opportunities, as does the district's central office.

The school's reputation as an innovative institution was well-known. So, you eagerly accepted a request from a central office administrator to work with the math department to develop alternative learning activities for students with different learning styles. As you expected, most of the teachers were already familiar with theories of learning styles and were adept in developing classroom activities. Everything went smoothly. The activities were designed in less than three months, and everyone expressed pleasure at how the project turned out, particularly two eleventh grade teachers who seemed to be leaders in the department.

Today has been particularly tiring and tedious, so you have decided to drop by Ontherun to get a quick boost of the enthusiasm that is rampant there. Your mood became more sour, however, as (1) two math teachers excitedly exclaimed about some new activities they were trying that had "temporarily" pushed your project aside, (2) a new department teacher asked who you were and what kind of project you were pushing, and (3) one of the eleventh grade teachers told you about the new job he had taken in another district. What had happened, you wondered?

Epilogue

The more you puzzled over the occurrences at Ontherun, the more you decided to look a little closer at what was really going on beneath the surface beehive of activity. The first thing you noticed was that there was no curriculum teachers followed. Two teachers you asked said they were given a notebook of suggested activities, but that there were no expectations that a teacher would use it more than any other teaching reference.

As you thought about this, you wandered into the teachers' lounge. On the bulletin board, you saw numerous notices under the "Current Staff Development Opportunities" heading. Over the next two months, teachers had their choice of conferences to attend, courses to take, and projects to join.

You also noticed a lot of new faces you had not seen before. Asking someone about whether student teachers had arrived, you found that the school had a high turnover rate. Many of the teachers were in graduate school and left as they finished degrees. Additionally, some of the teachers had spouses who worked at the university and occasionally changed jobs or left for sabbaticals.

You began to realize that maybe such an innovative school did not necessarily provide the best instruction to students. As if reading your mind, one of the math teachers joined you and sighed, "I sure like teaching here, but sometimes I wonder if we even know what really works with the kids." You wonder that too, and you also wonder what would happen to new practices even if they were proven effective.

From Novelty to Lasting Change: Worksheet

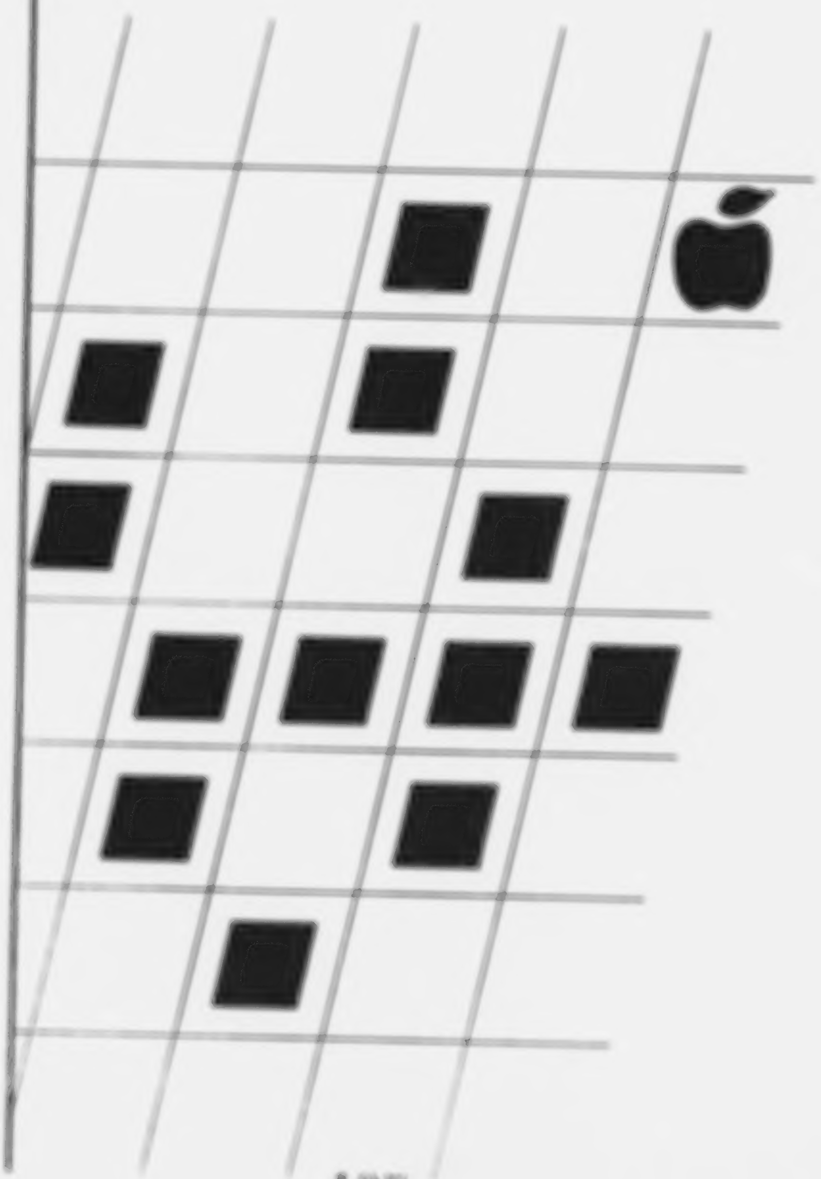
As a field agent, you probably can think of a number of crucial events or factors which make the difference between an innovation taking hold and not taking hold in a school. Take a moment and list those events that you think are most important for making an innovation a permanent fixture in a school you have worked with or are currently assisting. Then, based on your knowledge of the school, try to list the contextual features that are likely to enhance or inhibit the occurrence of these events.

Critical Events	Contextual Features
1. Example: Make sure the principal talks to each project participant once a week.	1. Example: Principal makes daily round of building, but only talks to faculty members who tend to be long time friends.
2.	2.
3.	3.

Strategies

1. Example: Try to get principal to talk to more than long time friends.
2.
3.

CONTEXT & CHANGE



VI.

Session VI: Getting Started

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Trainer's Overview

GOALS:

1. To identify four conditions of school context that promote effective change at the school level.

2. To identify the behavioral components of a planning team that effectively promotes these four conditions.

3. To provide guidance in analyzing a school's context.

MATERIALS:

1. The "School Improvement Team" presentation outline and narrative

2. "Conditions for Change and Supportive Leadership Behaviors" handout for the School Improvement Team presentation

3. "Improvement Team Candidate Profiles" for Building a Team activity

4. "Project Descriptions" for Building a Team activity

5. "Analyzing a School" presentation outline and narrative

6. Case studies -- Linwood elementary, Bayview Junior High, and Dorsey High School

PHYSICAL SETTING:

Theater of classroom style with provision for small group work or groups of 6-8 with a focal point for the presentations.

TRAINING SEQUENCE AND TIME REQUIRED:

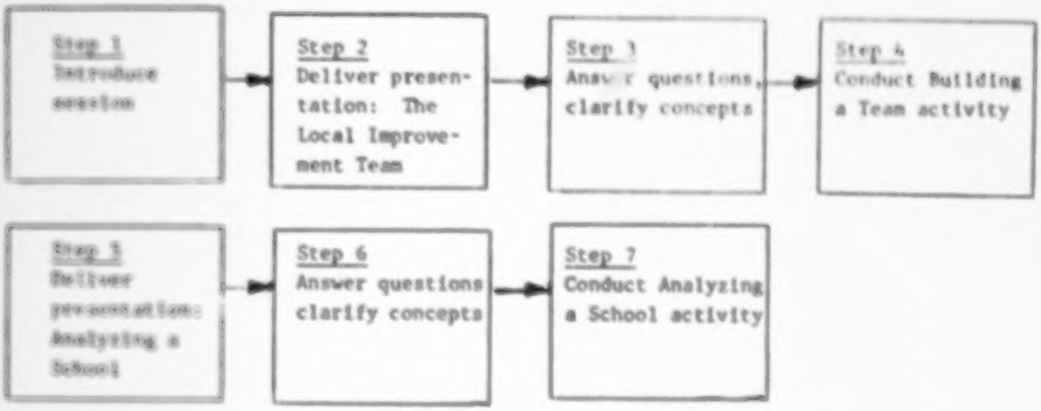
1. The Local Improvement Team presentation...
   45 - 60 minutes

2. Building a Team skill development activity and discussion...
   30 - 45 minutes

3. Analyzing a School presentation ...
   30 - 45 minutes

4. Analyzing a School case study activity and discussion ...
   45 - 60 minutes

TRAINING STEPS:


Step 1
Introduce session
Step 2
Deliver presentation: The Local Improvement Team
Step 3
Answer questions, clarify concepts
Step 4
Conduct Building a Team activity
Step 5
Deliver presentation: Analyzing a School
Step 6
Answer questions clarify concepts
Step 7
Conduct Analyzing a School activity

STEP SUGGESTIONS:

Step 1 Introduce the session by outlining the upcoming activities. Note that the session emphasizes preparing the staff at a site to assume the responsibility for being their own change agents when the field agent leaves.

Step 2 Deliver the presentation "The School Improvement Team," using either the outline or narrative. Emphasize the following points.

- There are certain conditions needed for change to take hold and one of the field agent's and local improvement team's major tasks is to insure the presence of these conditions.
- Site staff need preparation and training if they are to assume change agent responsibilities.
- This preparation should begin from the outset of the field agent's involvement.
- Field agents must select local staff carefully when deciding who will assume change agent responsibilities; not everyone is right for the task.

Use the handouts as appropriate during the presentation.

Step 3 Answer questions and clarify concepts about critical conditions for change and the local improvement team.

Step 4 Conduct the "Building a Team" skill development activity as follows.

a. DIVIDE PARTICIPANTS INTO GROUPS of 6-8 individuals.

b. EXPLAIN TO PARTICIPANTS that this activity is a simulation of forming a team that might accompany a typical improvement project. Each group member is to be a field agent and as a group they are to select five project participants, justify their choices, and develop a scenario for how they would help the group develop necessary leadership skills. Also, explain that only the candidates listed are to be considered for the team.

c. GIVE EACH GROUP a project description and the team candidate profiles. Tell them to read the handouts and ask questions concerning the activity.

d. BEGIN THE ACTIVITY facilitating group processes (e.g., keeping group members on task, clarifying concepts, providing information, helping adjudicate differences). As they begin selecting their planning team, group members should select a recorder. Also, if they think it will help the process, they should elect a group leader. Keep reminding them of the time.

e. STOP THE ACTIVITY and have the participants report on their team. This report should detail the planning team members selected, why they were selected, and how the field agent would assist leadership development.

Step 5 Deliver the presentation "Analyzing a School," using the building a team discussion as a point of departure. Use either the outline or narrative and emphasize the following points:

- review the eight local conditions that affect change and innovation
- give examples of how each condition can affect a project
- use the "School Context Rating Form" to illustrate the types of questions to ask in order to find out the status of each condition.

Step 6 Answer questions and clarify concepts about analyzing a local situation. Perhaps give participants a short break.

Step 7 Conduct the "Analyzing a School" case study activity as follows.

a. DIVIDE PARTICIPANTS into two-person field agent teams.

b. EXPLAIN TO PARTICIPANTS that each team has just been assigned to a school where they will be introducing a new project. Using the description which you will provide, they are to analyze the context of the school by identifying conditions they think will influence the initiation, implementation, or continuation of the project and note what affect these conditions might have. They also are to suggest field agent strategies for dealing productively with the conditions they have identified.

c. GIVE EACH TEAM one of the case studies. Wherever possible, match the school level of the case to the school level of the participants.

[NOTE: Each case study includes a description of the project to be introduced. If practical, you may have participants substitute one of their own current or past projects.]

d. BEGIN THE ACTIVITY facilitating group processes (e.g., keeping group members on task, clarifying concepts, providing information, helping adjudicate differences). Keep reminding them of the time.

e. STOP THE ACTIVITY and have the participants report on their analysis. This report should detail the conditions and indicators of those conditions, the role the conditions will play in the conduct of the project, and the field agents' technical assistance strategies. During this reporting session, encourage teams to compare their analyses. There is great value in having the participants interact, compare notes, and generally inform each other.

The School Improvement Team: Presentation Outline

A. Importance of Local Support

B. Four necessary conditions for change (distribute HANDOUT on Conditions for Change)
   1. Resources
   2. "Grace" period
   3. Encouragement and recognition
   4. Routinization

C. Assisting leadership development
   1. Establishing responsibilities
   2. Initial leadership opportunities
   3. Between-meeting assignments
   4. Continual assessment of local conditions

The School Improvement Team: Presentation Narrative

We believe that the quality of local leadership is the major internal determinant of an improvement project's success. And as we discussed in Session Five, we feel participant selection should include criteria based on a staff member's location in a school's communication and influence networks. Yet, so far we've not specified the complex collection of behaviors that constitute effective leadership. We intend to do that now and in so doing unpack the conditions and behaviors that underlie the vague and overused phrase, "local support for change." And we'll provide some hints about how to encourage that support.

As we noted earlier, planning and implementation are much more likely to be successful when local administrators actively support them. This support legitimizes the change activity in participants' eyes, and it can be effectively conveyed through either of two leadership styles--facilitative or directive; but without the principal's involvement implementation will not take place. Administrator support also enables a project to survive long enough for participants to develop an understanding of and a commitment to the proposed changes. For these reasons the support of the principal has been one of our major themes.

Although there is also a contrapuntal theme--local leadership is indeed necessary, but the principal does not have to provide it as long as someone in the building does--this proposition has not received widespread, systematic attention. The research on internal change agents, for example, is largely limited to the value of superintendents' and principals' support. The value of external field agents has also been studied pretty extensively. The consensus is that their impact as potential candidates to carry out needed functions is limited, primarily because their departure from a site would create a void that, if left unfilled, would eventually harm the project's continuation. In our study, we found that a variety of individuals (including researchers studying the process) could legitimatize activities and motivate some teachers to implement and continue new classroom practices, but the principal was the only person in a position to do this with all teachers. Thus, although it is possible for other internal agents to become the primary supporters, it is unlikely that most schools will have someone with the time, flexibility, and personal clout to be as effective throughout the organization as the administrator can be.

Who does it is not a terribly important issue, however. The question of who does it can be reserved until it is known what has to be done and why. The "why's" represent local conditions necessary for change to occur; the "what's" are behaviors that enhance the probability that those conditions will be present.

Conditions for Change

The following discussion specifies four "whys"--conditions for effective school-level change--and lists some "whats"--behaviors that enhance each one's occurrence.

Condition #1: A school must have a considerable amount of local resources available--money, yes, but primarily staff time to plan and to discuss new practices.

For many, money talks and change projects tend to walk when special financial resources allocated to the project run out. Typically, districts rely heavily on external monetary support for change projects and are either unable or unwilling to make a local contribution to take up the slack when external support stops. Without this kind of external support, staff enthusiasm and energy often decline.

More important than money, however, is staff time. Staff need time for more than formal planning meetings. Teachers continue new practices most often when they can talk to one another and to others about their instruction. This takes the slack time which becomes available when schedules are made flexible. Yet, teachers usually have little flexibility in their schedules. Certainly purchasing substitutes creates some flexibility, but we found that this arrangement seldom proved satisfactory for teachers or students. Teachers felt they were more competent than the subs and tended to regard time away from their students--even if subs were there--as time stolen.

Therefore, one crucial condition to focus on is locating slack time for participants. Slack time is not given over to one's official duties. For change projects, the importance of slack time cannot be overestimated. David L. Clark et al. suggest that the availability of slack time is one of the seven features that identify excellent schools. Peters and Waterman point to its importance for successful businesses. Slack time enables staff to venture beyond the tried and true, to confer with peers about special or routine problems, to teach demonstration classes for new teachers, or to participate in change projects. We saw slack time obtained through changes in the schedule and through alterations in the structure of work arrangements. For example, the principal can shuffle teachers' assignments so project participants have common planning periods during which to meet. Alternatively, recognizing that teachers usually have little opportunity to discuss instruction with their peers, the principal can create new work groups or encourage existing ones to use available meeting times for that kind of discussion rather than for "administrivia." Either tactic can surmount the obstacle to change represented by the lack of slack time.

In addition to lack of money and lack of time, other minor resource snafus can bog down the change process. Two examples we noticed are the availability of physically comfortable facilities and clerical support for the project participants. Whether or not participants are comfortable, have refreshments, can get plans typed, and have documents reproduced for all members may seem like mundane considerations. However, when combined with slack time they become very important. If staff do not have much slack time, then switching meeting rooms, heating up a coffee pot, looking for a secretary, typing things, or running hastily to make xerox copies can slice deeply into their meetings. The School Improvement Team (SIT), therefore, needs to oversee local facility and clerical arrangements to enable a smoother running process.

Condition #2: A change project requires a "grace" period, during which (1) its continuation is not threatened, and (2) participants have an opportunity to gain an understanding of the changes required and to develop a commitment to them.

Michael Fullan argues convincingly that "changes in attitudes, beliefs, and understanding tend to follow rather than precede changes in behavior." When it comes to change, staff rarely begin a project bursting with commitment to the proposed practices. Instead, it takes time for commitment to develop. Our experiences suggest that implementation requires a learning process. Even with innovations that seemed clear, people in the RBS schools experienced substantial ambiguity--along with feelings of confusion, frustration, anger, and exhaustion--when they began using the new practices. Where implementation is successful, users go through a series of steps, including:

- initial undifferentiated use and day to day coping
- stepwise and disjointed use
- initial coordination and consolidation of basic routines
- coordinated practice and differentiated use
- refinement and extension.

It may take up to eighteen months for staff to achieve the higher levels.

While this learning goes on, the project needs protection to avoid its disappearance through accident, neglect, or teacher frustration. Locating slack time accomplishes part of this chore, but equally important is for the principal and other SIT members to exert pressure in a positive way to keep the process going and to buffer the process from external disruptions. Exerting positive pressure can be done at least two ways. First, the principal and SIT must continually remind participants that the project is the school's top priority (or one of the top two). A school's resources are usually too limited for it to pursue several priorities. If a project is not at the top of the list, it will be repeatedly relegated to the background. Second, staff can be reinforced repeatedly for their participation. As we've seen, encouragement and recognition from superiors is one of the most powerful and yet most easily supplied of incentives.

By buffering the process we mean ensuring that interruptions are minimal. The most important distraction to avoid is initiating a host of projects that compete for staff time and commitment. Secondarily, and more mundanely, a principal's (or other critical member's) unexpected exit from a planning meeting can be disruptive. The administrator need not attend all meetings, but those that are attended should have the administrator's undivided participation. It's a symbolic act and often a substantive one, as well.

Condition #3: For new practices to be successfully implemented and continued, staff need occasional encouragement and recognition for their efforts.

Early educational change research focused on whether an individual or an organization adopted an innovation. However, adoption was not tantamount to changing practice. Investigative attention, thus, shifted to the planning process that led to implementation, or the first attempts at trying new practices. More recently, the importance of tracing the fate of changes well beyond implementation has become apparent. It is now clear that the later phases of the change effort require just as much, if not more, nurturance as the early ones.

We said it before, and we'll say it again: Making sources of gratification, or deprivation, available to staff cannot be underestimated in the successful change process. Peters and Waterman describe a "paradox" of human nature--a need to stand out and a desire to be a on a "winning team." Both sides of the paradox underscore the significance of encouragement and recognition from peers, experts, and supervisors. This signals to individuals that what they are doing is worthwhile and should be continued.

Thus, an additional component of local support is to encourage and reinforce staff who make changes. This requires systematic, conscious effort. In essence, the principal and SIT are doing for the entire organization what was being done only for planning participants earlier in the process. It sounds like a lot, but we and others have found that it need not be a time-consuming activity. In fact, it is easily incorporated into the everyday schedule, assuming the administrator or SIT members interact with staff informally but routinely. Peters and Waterman identify an effective management style as "management by wandering around" and we suggest MBWA for helping continuation of change projects. Rather than relying on formal visits, the manager circulates to learn what staff are doing and to stimulate desired behavior. The length of the encounter is not critical, but the message is. In excellent companies, the message is consistently the organization's "core value;" that is, what's most important. Applying this to schools, supportive local leaders can frequently inquire about and emphasize the priority of new practices throughout the day. The heart of this activity is the principal or other key person signaling that the change project contains important organizational objectives and reinforcing attempts to enact them through the change project.

Condition #4: For new practices to last, they have to become routinized in procedures and guidelines.

Ideally, new practices should survive until their evaluation occurs, at which point their effectiveness would determine continuation. Realistically, changes rarely last that long. Too often they disappear through both "accident" and "neglect," to recall Fullan's words, unless staff continue to receive incentives for new behavior (as noted above) and unless the behavior is incorporated into existing policy.

Incorporating changes into regular school operation protects them from the departure of original implementers. Indeed, staff turnover is one of the more calamitous events to befall a project. Additionally, Incorporation gives new practices a "place" in the routine. Since new practices require staff to rearrange what they do, new practices often have to replace or be shoehorned in with the old ones. Without changes in guidelines or procedures, the new practices likely will be viewed as "add-ons." If the innovative practices remain add-ons, they will quickly be neglected. For these reasons, special attention has to be paid to incorporating changes into the daily operational routine to insure that they last, and the SIT needs to press for incorporation of the new practices.

This can be done in different ways, including: (1) codifying the practices into rules, (2) encouraging curriculum revision, (3) establishing a training program for newcomers, and (4) supporting project-related activities as a line item in the school budget. All have worked well in our experience. The underlying theme is that formal changes have to accompany incentives if the innovation is to stick.

In sum, we have identified six behavioral components of local support. They are:

- locating slack time
- overseeing local facility and clerical arrangements
- exerting positive pressure on participants
- buffering the process
- encouraging and reinforcing all staff
- pressing for incorporation.

Our experience and much that is said in the literature indicate that some configuration of these behaviors is necessary to support any and every change effort. Of course, not all of them will be necessary at every site and our experiences show that conditions of context play an important role.

For example, we've seen that the organizational arrangement of grade level groups or departments influences whether teachers have access to sources of adult encouragement other than the principal for certain activities. Recall from Session Four that we found that school subunits could be divided into at least four categories: (1) the Social Club, where teachers frequently but informally discussed instruction among themselves; (2) the Professional Team, where teachers not only talked with one another frequently but also specified curriculum guidelines for all members to follow; (3) the Administrator's Delight, where collegial interaction was rare but conformity to administrative expectations and established procedures was high; and (4) the Egg Crate--the modal situation for teachers--where teachers were isolated from other staff. In both the Social Club and Professional Team situations, teachers are an available source of incentives. If these groups support a proposed change, the SIT can rely on encouragement to occur naturally. In the Egg Crate or Administrator's Delight situations, on the other hand, encouragement may best be supplied by the principal or other planning team member.

What can a field agent do to assist leadership development within the planning team? In closing, we offer a few suggestions.

- From the beginning, tell the team what responsibilities they will eventually have to assume if they want their project to succeed.
- Provide some initial leadership opportunities by encouraging planning team members to handle meetings in which they report to non-participants about the project's progress.
- Assign some between-planning-meeting assignments that require members to talk to staff members, such as informally and one-on-one soliciting input, ideas, or opinions from non-participants.
- Devote some time at almost every session to assessing whether local conditions that will support change are

beginning to emerge and to brainstorming ways to promote them better.

It is amazing to us how continually addressing a topic eventually leads to action on it. So the best guide to follow is to keep reminding yourself and others of what is expected of them and necessary for all involved to do in order to achieve success.

Suggested Reading

Clark, D. L., Lotto, L. S., and Astuto, T. A. (1984). Effective schools and school improvement: A comparative analysis of two lines of inquiry. Educational Administration Quarterly, 20 (3), 41-68.

Firestone, W. A. and Corbett, H. D. (1988). Organizational change. In Norman Boyan (Ed.), Handbook of Research on Educational Administration. New York: Longman.

Fullan, M. (1985). Change processes and strategies at the local level. Elementary School Journal, 85(3), 391-421.

Analyzing a School: Presentation Outline

A. What to look for

1. Availability of Resources
2. Incentives and Disincentives for Involvement
3. Nature of School Structure
4. School Priorities
5. Factions
6. Staff Turnover
7. Current Practices
8. Prior Projects

B. Becoming informed about school conditions

1. Interviewing as a strategy
2. Informal observations
3. Using informants
4. Reviewing documents
5. School Context Rating Form

Analyzing a School:
Presentation Narrative

Having described our findings and hopefully argued convincingly that field agents should consider local school conditions and use them wherever possible to guide their technical assistance strategies, we now turn to a practical issue: How does one analyze a school's context?

We believe strongly that field agents need up-to-date knowledge of the status of a school's contextual conditions. Furthermore, we feel they should deliberately seek such knowledge before beginning a project and continually monitor the situation to ensure that the knowledge is current. The remainder of this section consists of our suggestions about gathering information field agents can use to identify and understand each of the eight conditions we have discussed in this program.

Availability of Resources

School resource levels will influence the amount of time that staff members are able and willing to devote to a project. Teachers' schedules leave little time for them to meet in groups to plan educational change. Resources may also be needed to hire substitutes or to pay teachers to attend meetings after school. Our advice to field agents faced with situations where resources seem short is to think non-conventionally and examine the feasibility of other alternatives--enlisting personnel with more flexible schedules (counselors or specialists, for example) as participants, or having non-participants cover classes during meetings. The following information should help field agents in resource-scarce schools to minimize the influence of resource availability on innovation planning and implementation.

Teachers. Examine the teachers' schedules and circumstances. To what extent are teachers available to participate in planning? Do they have planning periods or other time that can be used flexibly? Do enough teachers have planning periods in common to arrange meetings then? Are teachers available after school to attend meetings? Do administrators feel comfortable asking teachers to relinquish planning or other "free" time to attend meetings? When do "busy seasons" occur (e.g., reporting and testing periods, major holidays, end-of-year activities)?

Other staff. Look for help among non-teaching staff. What employees (e.g., assistant administrators, specialists, counselors) have flexible schedules that allow them to participate with a minimum of disruption to the school? Who is available to handle such details as scheduling meetings, reserving meeting rooms, notifying participants, and providing clerical/typing assistance? Who has or is willing to obtain expertise in the area of the innovation? Are they also willing/able to assist other participants? Are others available to cover participants/classrooms during project meetings?

Administrators. Find out if you can increase principals' and vice principals' involvement. To what extent are administrators willing and able to participate actively, attend meetings, and talk with participants about the project at other times? Does the principal have an assistant to relieve him or her of other duties that might otherwise impinge upon the principal's involvement in the project? Is an administrator available to assume project leadership--if that is wise in a given situation? To what extent is the administrator willing to devote school resources to the project, or does he or she consider other things more important?

Substitute teachers. Substitutes can solve some problems but they may cause others. Is money available to pay substitutes? If not, can it be obtained from other sources? What is the school's or district's practice regarding using substitutes to free teachers to do development work? Are substitutes available in sufficient quantity? Do teachers consider them competent? If long meetings are to be held frequently or over a long period of time, can substitutes be contracted and assigned to the same classrooms throughout the project?

Money. We all know that more money is not necessarily the answer, yet it can help. Is money available for other purposes besides substitutes? To purchase materials and equipment? To pay teachers for working on non-school time or during the summer? To purchase refreshments for project meetings? To duplicate project materials? To hire consultants? Can money be secured from special grants or funds? Can the school or district reallocate money from another budget line?

Incentives and Disincentives for Involvement

People's perceptions of incentives or disincentives for participating in program planning and implementation influences their willingness to do so. If, for example, participants expect to be evaluated more favorably as a result of participating in a project or relish the opportunity to discuss professional matters with peers, they are likely to be more willing to devote scarce time to a program. On the other hand, if disincentives are high (e.g., if participation threatens the quality of instruction students receive), people may be less willing to be involved. We recommend that field agents consider incentives and disincentives with the following in mind.

> *Role in teacher evaluation*. A strong link to evaluation can boost both the quantity and quality of participation. Is mere participation likely to lead to a more favorable evaluation or to avoidance of a negative one? For example, are all teachers expected to participate in extra projects? Might implementation influence a teacher's evaluation? Is the innovation such that administrators could use it to evaluate teachers? If so, are they likely to do so?
>
> *Other perceived rewards*. Look to see what other aspects of their jobs staff find rewarding and try to make a link. Will people receive inservice credit or money for participating? Might the project help advance their careers (e.g., through publicity, increased contact with administrators, opportunities to exhibit leadership)? Are resulting changes likely to increase student achievement or motivation? Are some participants especially concerned about or interested in the content of the innovation? Do people value the opportunity for increased professional contact with colleagues, administrators, or outside experts?
>
> *Contribution to meeting external requirements*. Although school staffs don't like top-down mandates, most usually attempt to comply. Hooking project participation to requirements may increase that participation. What state or district mandates or expectations can the innovation help participants meet? What school person(s) are most responsible for ensuring that the requirements are met (principal, curriculum coordinator, language arts specialist)? What additional requirements are anticipated in the future?
>
> *Detraction from other responsibilities*. Identify the disincentives, also, and try to neutralize their effects. How does spending time in meetings or implementing an innovation reduce the extent to which

participants can meet their other responsibilities? Do they feel they are depriving students by leaving them with a person who is less likely to provide a valuable learning experience? Are people concerned that they will be less likely to cover a particular body of content? Do administrators or teachers fear that the time is not well spent?

Imposition on non-participants. Think of how non-participants look at the project and those involved in it. In what ways does the project impose on non-participants? Are they asked to relinquish their time to cover participants' classes or to accept additional students? Are special classes cancelled, leaving more students in classrooms or depriving non-participants of free periods? How extensive are those impositions? How have non-participants reacted to them? How have those reactions influenced participants?

Nature of School Structure

The extent to which work-related activities are interdependent varies widely within as well as between schools. For example, teaching activities may be much more closely coordinated in one department than another; or the content that is taught may be highly specified but not the activities used to teach it. In some schools, a principal's mandate to change may ensure immediate implementation. In others it may not. Therefore, field agents identifying potential influences on change projects, especially influences on how widely changes get implemented, need to be alert to differences within and between schools.

Coordination of teaching. When teachers are linked naturally, change projects often spread easily. When they're not linked, field agents may have to link them. Do teachers plan lessons together, or at least keep one another closely informed about what they are teaching? To what extent does teacher cooperation occur in various grade levels, departments, or other organizational units? Is the school--or portions of it--organized into teams? What teachers plan together informally? When teachers coordinate with one another, what to they coordinate? Content? Methods? Lessons for particular days? Tests? If one teacher wants to make a change, how does he or she arrange it with others?

Formal curricula. When curriculum guides influence behavior, linking changes to them can help spread the changes. What formal curricula exist in the school? What subject areas do they cover? To what extent are teachers expected to follow the curricula? Do they comply with those expectations? How detailed are the curricula? Do they name the specific materials or methods that are to be used? Are teachers able to use content/materials/methods that are not in the curricula? Do they have time to do so? What are the procedures for changing the curricula?

Interaction with administrators. Even minimal administrator involvement can help spread changes. How extensively do teachers talk with school administrators about school concerns? What do they talk about? Under what circumstances--during informal interaction before or after school, common planning periods, and faculty meetings, or only at times of evaluations? How often do evaluations occur? How are they perceived by teachers?

Agreement about goals and priorities. Linking a change project to a high priority school or district goal usually helps insure staff commitment and effort. What evidence exists that certain goals are particularly important at the present time? Does the school have a "mission" that staff members are aware of and with which they agree? What themes echo through inservice sessions, posters, or slogans? What other special projects has the school adopted?

School Priorities

The amount of compatibility between school and project goals and priorities influences teachers' and administrators' willingness to devote time and other resources to a project. People are more inclined to work on a project that contributes to the achievement of important school goals than one which either does not contribute or one that detracts from them. The questions raised above about agreement on goals and priorities can help a field agent identify ones which are most important. Other considerations that should provide additional information about school goals and priorities include the following.

Identifying school priorities. Look for school priorities that can be linked to project activities and outcomes. What are the major school goals? What is the relative priority of each? What are the perceived major problems of the school? How does the innovation address them?

The match between a project and school priorities. Avoid letting the project get pushed to the bottom of the list. How and why did the school become involved in the project? How does the project address school priorities and problems? If the project addresses goals/problems that are of low priority, has an administrator strongly endorsed it? Has he/she informed staff members that working on it is important--even if it means temporarily neglecting other goals?

Factions

School factions can disrupt any project by making it difficult for people to work together cooperatively. Planning time may be wasted negotiating conflicts. Implementation may suffer if a project becomes identified with one particular group because opposing groups may resist the change. Field agents must find out if there are factions present in a particular school and try to use them positively.

The nature of school factions. Look for indications that staff factions might be obstacles to the project. What factions or tensions exist within a school? Is the faculty split into dissenting groups? Do tensions exist between faculty and school administrators? The district offices? The school board? What is the relationship between the teachers' association or union and others? What is the status of the teachers' contract? Are there tensions that involve the community? Students? How did the groups develop? Do they revolve around particular issues?

Factions and projects. If factions exist and can be obstacles, look for ways to avoid them or turn them to the project's advantage. Who is aligned with what sides? Who belongs to what factions or cliques? Where do various groups stand in relation to one another? How strong are the tensions? Are they so strong that people have difficulty participating in meetings together or working together in situations that might be construed as evaluative? Can some factions be ignored? Do all factions need to "buy" the project? Can one faction influence others?

Staff Turnover

The rate of staff turnover in a school can reveal a number of conditions in a school. It can point to uncertainty over what direction a school or district should take, concern over poor working conditions, or even such good working conditions that the district is a stepping stone for more prestigious positions. Regardless, as we have seen, staff turnover can seriously affect a project. Among other effects, a key advocate may leave the school and create a need for additional advocates; a participant with important responsibilities may leave and create a void; planners may leave before initiating implementation activities. Field agents can learn about staff turnover by considering the following.

> The rate of turnover. Find out how often staff come and go, why they come and go, and who comes and goes most frequently. What proportion of the staff have been at the school for at least three years? Five? Ten? What proportion has spent most of their careers in the building? How long has the principal been there? The superintendent? Where in the school (grade levels, departments) are the relatively new staff members?
>
> Potential turnover effects on a project. Any turnover has some affect, but projects can survive turnover--particularly if you're ready for it. At the beginning of a new school year, what participants are no longer at the school? What needs do their absences create? Do their project roles need to be filled by someone else? How important is it to obtain the support of their successors? Who are the new staff members? What expectations do they/others have regarding their participation in the project?

Current Practices

Innovations usually require changes in behavior and some participants must depart further from their everyday patterns of behavior than others to implement innovations. Some are so locked into a particular behavior pattern that changing it would require that they ignore their instincts and follow procedures in which they may not have confidence. Since current practices can be quite influential, a field agent should learn a lot about them in a school.

> Departures from customary practices. The more changes required by a project, the more difficulty getting staff to undertake the project. What current practices are likely to be influenced by the project and related changes? Teaching methods? Decision-making processes? Styles of working together? How different are those current practices from what they would be should the change be implemented? How does the magnitude of the differences vary among participants? What difficulties may participants encounter in changing their practices?
>
> The extent to which customary practices are ingrained. You can teach an old dog new tricks, but it's harder with older dogs. Is the

project designed to influence behaviors that are very natural to participants? Ones that affect what participants see as core practices? Or peripheral ones?

Prior Projects

The prior history of innovative projects in a school may influence staff members' attitudes toward new projects or field agents. We found instances where potential participants were hesitant to commit time and energy to a project because they suspected that, within a year or two, administrators would discontinue supporting it in favor of something else that would come along. There were also cases where potential participants were skeptical that outsiders would be able to help them. Field agents should find out about prior projects at a school.

> The nature of prior projects. No one gets enthusiastic about repeating a project much like another that was aborted six months ago. What other projects were attempted during the last 3-5 years? What happened to them? Why?
>
> The legacy of prior projects. A good experience can help you; a bad one can cause large problems. Do staff members have a particular attitude toward new projects? For example, do they think the principal adopts a lot of new things--to receive favorable attention from the superintendent or community--but does not follow through on them? Do they think that outsiders are unlikely to understand their situation or to offer suggestions they have not already considered?

Becoming Informed About School Conditions

Obtaining answers to all of the questions suggested in the previous section can be very time consuming, so field agents must decide what information is most important in a particular situation. This will help them allocate their time to getting the most useful information. Information gathering of this sort should be part of the preparation process that occurs prior to beginning work in a new site, but that shouldn't be the end of it. Field agents also should collect contextual data deliberately during the early stages of a project and remain alert to additional information at the later stages, as well. We recommend multiple strategies for obtaining this information--interviewing participants and administrators, listening to people (participants and non-participants), talking to them informally, and examining various documents, for instance.

We found these data collection activities to be particularly useful for learning about such things as school resources, participants' schedules, school problems or goals that are currently especially important, and staff turnover.

While some field agents may feel uncomfortable asking a lot of questions, because they feel it is a task more appropriate for researchers, we've found that school administrators and participants see questions like this as evidence that the field agent is interested in them. Many people with whom we've worked seem to be gratified that an outsider who deals with many people in many schools is genuinely interested in them. Beware, though. Field agents who spend too much time in a setting collecting contextual information can appear to have little else to do; arriving slightly early for an appointment or a meeting is a way to add legitimacy to this activity. Needless to say, however, avoid asking questions that are threatening and that suggest you are judging people's performances.

In addition to the strategies for collecting context information listed above, we had success--in some cases--with informants. We suggest gathering information from informants--teachers or administrators willing to talk with you at length--as a time saver. Field agents can acquire data from informants that would take months to get through other means. When using informants, at least two precautions must be taken, however. First, be careful to avoid having other people identify you with the informant.

Field agents should not align themselves with any particular individual or group. Second, do not accept information from informants as true before confirming it independently. People who are eager to provide information may not have complete or accurate information.

To help you collect information about school context and make an informed judgment about a school's readiness to undertake and carry out a change effort, we've developed a school context rating form. This rating form is strictly an informal device that we've found useful for getting a general picture of a school's readiness for change. It's not scientific, but it can be helpful.

The form itself is straightforward and short enough so that you can fill it out easily and get a good picture of the school pretty quickly. It's a simple Likert scale that asks you to rate each of the critical factors of a school's context, as we've discussed them earlier, from a "high" of five to a "low" of one. As you use it, however, remember that factors of context rarely, if ever, operate in isolation. That is, they interact in the school environment. One influences the other; and because of this, you can't look at them independent of each other. Factions influence linkages. Resources influence incentives. Current practices are influenced by prior projects and they influence priorities. Also factors can compensate for each other. A high degree of linkage might make up for high levels of tension. Likewise, a lot of incentives available for those who change could overcome high degrees of reluctance to change, and so on. So as you use the rating form, think more of the big picture caused by the interaction of contextual factors rather than how a school rates on each individual factor.

We've found this rating form useful. You may not; and, in fact, you might want to create your own method for assessing school context. But, remember, whatever methods of collecting information are used, field agents should gather information before a project begins and then continually expand and update it. A field agent who is aware of the contextual conditions in a particular school can reduce their effects by adjusting his or her actions or attempting to alter the conditions, but information about those conditions must be kept current.

Session VI: Getting Started

Masters for Handouts

Conditions for Change and Supportive Leadership Behaviors [illegible]

Building an Improvement Team: Candidate Profiles [illegible]

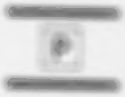
Building an Improvement Team: Project Descriptions [illegible]

Analyzing a School: Case Studies [illegible]

School Context Rating Form [illegible]

Conditions for Change and Supportive Leadership Behaviors

T	Teacher
A	Administrator
C	Curriculum
P	Project

Conditions	Leadership Behaviors
Available local resources	• Locating slack time • Overseeing facility and clerical arrangements
Grace Period	• Exerting positive pressure on participants • Buffering the project 
Implementation encouragement and reinforcement	• Providing incentives to staff
Incorporation into rules and procedures	• Pressing for incorporation

ERIC

Building an Improvement Team: Candidate Profiles

(Select 7 team
members from this
list)

Max	Head of the Instructional Media Center; currently enrolled in a doctoral program; expects to receive an Ed.D. in Administration; is writing his dissertation on principals and time management.
Marty	Physical education teacher; has very good rapport with students; seen as a bit of a maverick by other staff members.
Ken	Chairman of the language arts department; lives in another county, twenty-five miles away from school; runs several after-school programs for students.
Ann	English teacher; recently transferred from elementary school; one year below retirement age.
Ben	Security guard; former neighborhood policeman; grew up in neighborhood; went to this school; was an outstanding college athlete.
Trudy	Social studies teacher; teachers union representative; Ben's wife.
Barbara	Principal; formerly elementary school vice-principal; beginning second year as principal.
Ted	Vice-principal; has been in this school for over twenty years; passed over for principalship.
Ali	Counselor; first year as a school counselor; formerly a psychiatric social worker; also a Muslim Iman (priest).
Toni	Student teacher from nearby college; being used as a floating substitute.
Calvin	Assistant superintendent; expects to be appointed superintendent within next two years.
Jerry	Science teacher; new to school this year; formerly at nearby high school; requested this assignment.
Judy	Acting as chairman of the mathematics department while regular chairman has a baby; ordinarily an algebra teacher.

Caroline	President of the local PTA; runs after-school recreation program in neighborhood.
Jesse	President of the student council; A-student; excellent athlete; well-liked by other students.

Building an Improvement Team: Project Descriptions

Project 1: A Project in Oral History	The local district has been able to secure a small grant to develop a project in oral history. The proposal suggests that the project will be a joint language arts/social studies one in which students will collect and publish oral histories from neighborhood residents. Although the grant is small--$2,000--local district administrators are high on the project. It is the first grant they have won and they believe that doing a good job on this project will make it easier to win others.
Project 2: Quality Circles	A district administrator, having recently completed QC training, believes it will help solve some of the school's "morale" problems. Although this administrator is unable to clearly define these problems, he says he can "sense" them whenever he visits the school. He is willing to become involved in adapting his QC training to the school setting and in being a QC trainer and facilitator.
Project 3: Needs Assessment	Distressed by the low level of student achievement (as evidenced by low standardized test scores in math, reading, science, and social studies), state monitors have earmarked the school as one in need of remedial action. The first step in this remediation is a needs assessment process involving a variety of questionnaires, observations, and interviews aimed at determining the sources of low achievement. The principal persuaded the state monitors to allow site staff to conduct the needs assessment rather than having it done by outsiders.
Project 4: The Chess Championship	To everyone's delight, the school's chess team has won the regional chess championship and has been invited to compete for the state title. Unfortunately, neither the school nor the school board have enough money to send the team to the state capital--and certainly none to send them to the national championships should they win the state title. There is tremendous pressure from parents and students to find a way to raise enough money for the chess team's trip. In fact, there is some pressure to develop a way to generate money for student activities in general.

Project 5: Continuing Education

In an attempt to boost the image of schools and students in the district, district administrators have opened portions of some schools for community use. In addition, some schools have been asked to develop adult education courses. The schools selected will receive a stipend for each adult enrollee, so there is some inducement to create course offerings that are attractive. This school and its staff have been selected.

Analyzing a School: Case Studies *

Linwood Elementary School

Bayview Junior High School

Dorsey High School

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*We wish to acknowledge the following for their help in the development of these cases: Thomas B. Corcoran, Linda Dunatov, Rima Miller, and Michele Woods.

Linwood Elementary School

Linwood Elementary School is located within a bustling community found on the fringes of a major urban center. The population has grown spectacularly since development of the area into a residential community began in the late 1950s.

Staff and Student Profile

Linwood's staff includes twenty-three teachers, two special education instructors, one librarian, one counselor, two basic skills teachers, and twelve part-time grandparent aides. There are also two educational clerks, two custodians, one secretary, and the principal. Of the 29 faculty members, there are 20 white females, 4 white males, 4 black females, and 1 black male. Most of the older white faculty members are products of the local community.

Many of the white teaching staff members have been employed by the district for more than 15 years. A few of the newer staffers were hired when the Linwood School was opened, and a small number of recent college graduates have filled teaching vacancies caused by attrition.

Districtwide budget cuts have prevented the hiring of additional staff to broaden the breadth of services at Linwood. In fact, during the past few years a guidance counselor, the art and music teachers, and all 12 teacher aides were riffed. Now additional budget cuts may require more teacher layoffs.

Since the beginning, the Linwood staff members have experienced chronic difficulty in identifying a common set of schoolwide goals. Perhaps as a corollary to this dilemma, a strong spirit of unity is lacking among the staff and students. A fourth grade teacher who has been at Linwood from its start observed, "Many of the teachers realized we had some instructional problems during the first year. We tried to discuss them with the principal at that time, but he told us not to worry, that they would work themselves out eventually. They haven't, and our students show it."

The school's curriculum adheres to district guidelines and is similar to that found in neighboring schools. Traditional offerings include reading, spelling, math, science, social studies, and language arts. Physical education, music, and art--subjects formerly taught by special teachers--have become the responsibility of the classroom teacher. No formal enrichments or supplemental programs exist for students who advance faster than the average student.

The Administration

The principal of Linwood Elementary School was reared in the community and was formerly an assistant principal at the local middle school. Joseph Delrio was transferred involuntarily to Linwood after the person who was initially hired became ill and was required to resign and go on an extended sick leave.

Delrio, who in his former position had been responsible for student attendance and discipline, was considered by the central office as "the best person to establish order in the new school." However, many of the Linwood staff consider the thrust of the principal's leadership to be "misguided." There also is some feeling among staff that Delrio lacks understanding of staff and student needs at the elementary level. "Delrio's office is like an ivory tower. Few faculty have been in it, to my knowledge, and he rarely sets foot in our classrooms. The students are actually afraid of him," reported a first grade teacher. Another said, "I used to love teaching, but since I've been at this school, I feel burned out. The teachers are not consulted about any instructional decisions. We hear about them at faculty meetings, or in memos."

Staff members complain that Delrio is unable to attend to matters not related to attendance and discipline. The students are treated like inmates and we are the prison guards," said one teacher. "With Delrio as principal there are only two goals for the school--high attendance and strong discipline," said another teacher.

Staff Attitudes

Linwood is described by most staffers as a living nightmare. "We find ourselves in a totally strange environment--new students, new colleagues, new faculty. At the first staff meeting, our administrator led us through a short tour of the building. After the tour, we were dismissed and instructed to prepare for the next day's arrival of new students. Delrio's leadership started and culminated with that guided tour. From then on, it has been every man for himself."

No special meetings are held to help new teachers adjust to their set of circumstances. Delrio does hold monthly staff meetings, but discussions are limited to administrative concerns. A request was submitted to include time during staff meeting for grade level meetings among teachers. The request was denied and teachers were encouraged to organize such meetings independently.

Linwood's Open House is organized completely by the school principal. School guests and staff attend a general session during which Delrio introduces the school's discipline policy. Packets distributed to parents and staff members include a student handbook describing specific rules for establishing acceptable behavior and the repercussions for those who incur infractions. No discussions addressing curricular offerings or instructional expectations are entertained. "A bi-monthly newsletter dominated by discipline success stores and a pep talk from the principal is Delrio's idea of good community relations," remarked a first-grade teacher.

Bayview Junior High School

There were 916 students enrolled in grades, 7, 8, and 9 at Bayview Junior High in 1982-83, or at least there were on September 30, 1982. Enrollment has declined steadily but slowly since reaching a peak of 983 students in 1979-80.

Staffing

The declining enrollments and federal and state budget cuts have caused reductions in the staff in recent years. Nine teaching positions, a second assistant principal, a counselor, and two janitors have been let go. Of the remaining 49 teachers in the building, 44 have tenure.

Needless to say, the teachers at Bayview are experienced. The average age is 39.0 and their average years of experience is 13.7. Several staff members have been at the school for 20 years. Most of the teachers are graduates of the nearby state college or the state university which is about 40 miles away. Many of them are lifelong residents of the community; most of those who are not live in adjacent towns.

The staff is predominantly white; there are six black staff members and two Hispanics. All of the administrators and all but three of the eleven department heads are white males. Two department heads are white females, and a Hispanic heads the small bilingual department. There are 28 women and 21 men on the teaching staff.

At one time, there was some turnover of the staff as teachers moved to the high school or took positions in neighboring communities. These opportunities have disappeared, so most staff members plan to remain at Bayview until they retire.

The Curriculum

Each of the areas is headed by a department chairperson who handles personnel, instructional, and budgetary matters at the department level. Chairpeople teach only four periods per day in order to have time for their supervisory duties and receive a small salary increment.

The school day begins at 8:30 a.m. There are 8 periods in the day, lasting 40 minutes, a 10 minute homeroom period, and a 30 minute lunch period. School ends at 2:30 p.m. Most students take five academic subjects, art or music, physical education, and a shop class. The remaining periods are spent in supervised study halls in the cafeteria or large classrooms. Students taking remedial reading or bilingual education may miss art of music due to scheduling conflicts.

There is little consensus about the goals of the school. A survey conducted by the district in 1981 revealed that 15 staff members felt basic skills proficiency was the most important goal, 10 ranked respect for authority first, 7 selected student self-esteem, 5 picked development of critical thinking skills, and the remaining staff members were spread over 4 other goals. The older staff members tend to feel that subject mastery is the goal and that they must prepare students for the high school curriculum, but many of them don't expect their students to succeed in high school. Some staff members want to concentrate on the academically able, while others feel the school must bring all students up to an acceptable standard. One group of teachers has complained for years that there is no program for the gifted and that the heterogeneous grouping in all subjects but math and language arts is a mistake. The related issues of discipline, curricula, time allocations, homework, standards, and so forth, are often matters of discussion, and sometimes conflict in the faculty lounge.

The language arts program has a written curriculum that is articulated with both the elementary schools and the high school. The curriculum was developed over two summers by the teaching staff and was matched to the items on the Metropolitan Achievement Test (MAT) and the minimum skills test administered in the ninth grade. The math teachers are currently developing a similar curriculum guide. There is no written curriculum in the other areas. The science program is traditional and no laboratory science is offered until grade nine, when biology is taught. In science, social studies, and other areas, the curriculum is largely a matter of the texts available and the staff's--primarily the chairperson's--preferences.

Thus, there is little coordination generally. Teachers report that they rarely plan together--most indicate that this occurs once a month or less. There is no time set aside for such planning. Staff meetings are held once a month to go over administrative matters. There are department meetings once a month during the last 2 periods of the school day, but teachers report that these usually last only 20 to 30 minutes and "everyone looks forward to leaving early."

Dorsey High School

Dorsey High School serves its 1,700 students in grades 9 through 12 in three entirely separate buildings. Each of the three sites has distinct attributes and character. The main building is considered a physically dangerous place to be by students and staff alike. It is largely incidents that have occurred at this main building that have earned Dorsey a reputation as being a center of violent incidents, including some teacher assaults. The Annex is a much safer place largely due to two factors. First, other than a fire door, there is only one door to this building and it is a large, automatic steel garage door. This door is kept closed most of the time, thereby preventing outsiders from entering the building. In addition to this security factor, the Annex is considered safer because it is the site of a special vocational program into which certain students are block rostered, so they take all of their classes together in the Annex and never enter the main building. The Alternative School is also considered safer than the main building. As in the case of the Annex, this is due partly to the fact that the Alternative School is a self-contained unit and partly because it is a secure structure removed from the main building.

The Staff, Students, and Programs

The three sites of Dorsey High School serve 1,700 enrolled students--150 at the Alternative School, 200 at the Annex, and 1,350 at the main building. Rarely, however, does the daily attendance approximate these figures. The reported daily attendance rate for the main building is 60 percent, for the Alternative School it is 75 percent, and for the Annex it is 98 percent. The main building houses the general education program, college preparatory program, and the remedial programs. These program are standard offerings and representative of those one would find in any high school in this city. The 55 teachers in the main building, like the students, are racially balanced. On the average, they have been teaching six years or more and most are tenured. All belong to the teachers union which--in this city--is quite strong.

The Annex houses the Dorsey Auto Factory, a special vocational program for high-risk, violence-prone students. This program is subsidized by three local businesses that not only supply the machinery and parts the students need to repair cars, but also loan their auto mechanics and technicians to serve as industrial arts teachers. All of the factory students are Black, as are the five teachers. Factory teachers are certified in language arts or mathematics and they teach these subjects to factory students. These teachers were selected by a committee comprised of Dorsey's principal, the building's union representative, and representatives from the sponsoring businesses. All have been teaching more than 10 years, and all are tenured.

The Alternative School program is taught by five teachers, three of whom are just out of college and one of whom is the head of the social studies department. The Alternative School program is a gifted program which focuses on humanities. The program was developed by the social studies department head and is funded by a grant which she originally won. She now administers the program and serves as lead teacher and curriculum development specialist for it. She has no teaching responsibilities. The vast majority of students in this program are white and black. Few Hispanics are facile enough with the English language to pass the rather difficult entrance exam, according to one of the teachers.

As one might expect, the achievement levels of the students in the three Dorsey facilities is quite different. In the main building, the average student's CAT score is below the 30th percentile. In fact, 60 percent are below the 20th percentile. The average Annex student scores above the 70th percentile, with 25 percent of them above the 91st percentile. Alternative School students all score above the 80th percentile. Both students and staff attribute the discrepancy among the three facilities' average scores to the mini-school nature of the Annex and Alternative schools. In addition, the staff says that the Alternative school scores are markedly higher because it is selective. It draws only the best students. There is little agreement about reasons for the Annex' success as few know exactly what goes on there.

School Organization

Dorsey has one principal and three vice principals to oversee its operation. There are five counselors: three for the main building and one each for the Annex and Alternative School. There are a total of 89 teachers.

Current Problems

A former principal's promotion and the vacancy it left precipitated several tensions in the school, the community, and central office. All three vice principals applied for the job and one--the one in charge of personnel coordination--was strongly backed by the majority of the faculty. The community, concerned about drug and alcohol abuse and associated petty crime that seemed to be concentrated among Annex students, lobbied heavily to have a black principal appointed. (The former principal was white.) An ad hoc principal search committee was formed by some parents who wanted to have input into the selection process. All of these factions were ignored in the selection of a replacement.

Also, a recently published outside evaluation of the Annex program put the spotlight on the vast differences in student achievement scores among the three facilities. To make matters worse, the state accreditation officers, having been made aware of the low level of achievement in the main building, have scheduled [illegible] to be evaluated. Typically, a poor evaluation leads to a "conditional [illegible]" rating which, in turn, puts a school under a microscope for several years.

Miscellaneous Comments

An Annex industrial arts teacher: "Things are fine over here. We can control our students and make sure they're doing right. The rest of the school is a zoo with the animals in control. I'll be happy to get back to civilization."

A social studies teacher: "I've learned to come and go and just do my job. I lock my door and teach my classes. No one knows or cares what I'm doing. Luckily for my kids, I'm conscientious."

A vice principal: "[illegible]'s not perfect, but what school is? We've made progress and we're working on the new problems [illegible]. These students are so [illegible] deprived [illegible] surprising [illegible] that some are [illegible]. I'm surprised that so many [illegible]."

A counselor: "Isn't it [illegible]. What can these kids aspire to? The best of the lot are [illegible] doing college material. The Annex is the best that any of them have. This whole school should be run like the Annex."

A parent: "I tell my girls to study and behave in school but you can't fight their friends' influence. Two of my girls is in the Annex. I'm not worried about her. The other [illegible] say I don't know what she does all day. Well, no one tells me."

School Context
Rating Form

High Moderate Low

Resources (Optimum and realistic score = [illegible])

Amount of time
provided for [illegible]

5 4 3 2 1

Amount of clock time
available to
teachers

5 4 3 2 1

Level of financial
or material support
available

5 4 3 2 1

Incentives (Optimum score = [illegible])

Perception of
teachers' in-class
time

5 4 3 2 1

Opportunities for
formal recognition
of participants

5 4 3 2 1

Opportunities for
informal recogni-
tion

5 4 3 2 1

Linkages (Optimum and realistic score = [illegible])

Level of formal
staff interaction

5 4 3 2 1

Level of informal
staff interaction

5 4 3 2 1

High Moderate Low

Priorities (Optimum and realistic score = [illegible])

Level of priority among school goals

5 4 3 2 1

Level of priority among district goals

5 4 3 2 1

Factions (Optimum score = [illegible])

Level of tension between administrators and teachers

5 4 3 2 1

Level of tension among departments or grade levels

5 4 3 2 1

Level of tension within departments or grade levels

5 4 3 2 1

Turnover (Optimum score = [illegible])

Level of teacher turnover in last 5 years

5 4 3 2 1

Level of administrative turnover in last 5 years

5 4 3 2 1

Level of central office turnover in last 5 years

5 4 3 2 1

Current Practices (Optimum score = [illegible])

Level of "typical" behavior change required

5 4 3 2 1

High Moderate Low

Current Practices (Optimum score = 9-10)

Level of discrepancy between existing skills and needed skills

5 4 3 2 1

Amount of encouragement habitually present in school

5 4 3 2 1

Prior Projects (Optimum score = 6-8)

Number of "new" projects undertaken in last 5 years

5 4 3 2 1

Number of these projects not still actively in operation

5 4 3 2 1

OVERALL OPTIMUM SCORE = 16-17